

DOVETON;

OR,

THE MAN OF MANY IMPULSES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JERNINGHAM."

"I speak
Of what I know and what we feel within"
WORDSWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DOVETON.

CHAPTER I.

THE FATHER AND THE MOTHER.

“ Ungrateful woman ! I have tried to stifle
An old man’s passion ! Is it not enough
That thou hast made my son a restless man,
Banished his health and half unhinged his reason ?
————— I am old
A comfortless old man.”

COLERIDGE.

On the following day I acquainted my father with the nature of the resolution that I had formed relating to the secretaryship at *Sierra Leone*, but I said nothing of the promises made to me by Sir Reginald Edston. My father appeared to be slightly astonished ; but his countenance expressed

more of pleasure than of anger, when I told him, in a calm, but decisive voice, that my resolutions were unalterable, and that no power on earth should drive me to the shores of *Sierra Leone*.

"Have you told your mother, Gerard?" said he.

"No, sir—not yet."

"Then acquaint her, without loss of time.—As you say that your resolutions are unalterable, it would be useless for me to make an effort at directing their course into a different channel. But as I said—speak to your mother; you will find her, I think, in the drawing-room."

I went to my mother, and almost *verbatim* I repeated what I had just before advanced in the presence of my other parent.

"And what are your objections to the place?" asked my mother, in a low measured tone, which, I knew well enough, was indicative of intense anger.

"I object to it," said I, "for the same reasons that I would object to throw myself from a precipice, or leap into the bosom of the ocean—simply because I have not the impatient longings after immortality, which sent Cleombrotus headlong into the sea, and Empedocles down the crater of Vesuvius."

"I wish that you would speak more clearly in common language," said my mother.

"What I wish to observe is this, mother—that *Sierra Leone*, or the *White man's grave*, as it is called, is no place for me. I should certainly die if I were to go there, and I very much prefer living."

"Who could have put such stuff into your head?" asked my mother.

"I have read it in books," said I.

"Ah! those books they have turned your brain—But you will positively not accept this appointment to *Sierra Leone*."

"Positively not," I replied, in a very decisive voice; "Very well, then, Gerard, you have made your election, and must abide by the consequences of that election;"—and my mother walked out of the room.

When my mother spoke very slowly and very calmly, I always knew that she was in a deadly passion. On the present occasion, a common observer would have admired the excessive tranquillity which she exhibited throughout this conference; but I knew well enough, that this stillness was only the prelude of a dreadful storm.

And the storm came; but not in my presence; it descended upon the head of my poor father.

And then succeeded a more serene season. I believe that the better feelings of my mother's nature soon gained the ascendancy in her bosom. To speak truly, I do not think that she knew the

dangers of the place, to which she was consigning me, and that when the light, which I had been the first to throw upon her intellectual darkness, was rendered broad and clear by the further illustrations of my father, she repented that she had ever harboured a thought of sending me to the *White Man's Grave*, and soon slackened in her resentment against me for refusing to accept the appointment.

It may be asked why I said nothing to my parents concerning Sir Reginald's promises. I will tell you, reader; but, perhaps, when I have told you, you will be little able to enter into my feelings. I had full faith in the pledges of the baronet; and as I knew that he had both the will and the power to serve me, neither doubt nor fear entered into my breast to obscure the brightness of my prospects; but it was my desire that the sun of my prosperity should blaze suddenly upon my father and mother, without any dawning intimations which might render its full lustre less dazzling. Or, to speak more plainly, it was my desire to *surprise* them; and this desire so far from being an amiable feeling, as, indeed, for the most part it is, in my bosom was a very bitter one. That the absence of sympathy should produce the absence of confidence is not strange; indeed, it is most common; but there was something more in my reserve than the mere absence of confidence.

I had so long been treated with contumely—I had so long been looked upon as a thing of nought—both my intellectual and my moral qualifications had so long, as I thought, been undervalued,—that I now with many unworthy feelings of pride, bitterness and resentment—all the vile spawn of mortified vanity—looked forward gloatingly to the time when I might say to those who thought meanly of me, “I am not so poor a thing as you imagined me—neither so weak, so dull, nor so ~~useless~~. You see that I have done, unassisted, what none of you could do for me. I am the architect of my own fortune. The despised one is greater than you all.”

I confess that with such feelings as these I anticipated my coming triumph. It is not possible that any more unworthy, more mean, more pitiful feeling should enter into the bosom of a man. But out of such vile lusts proceeded my reserve—the profound silence that I maintained both in relation to Sir Reginald’s promises and the book I had written in secrecy.

I had finished my book, and as I reperused its pages, I looked with such an eye of self-complacency upon my labours, that I felt a hope almost amounting to a certainty, that my work, when sent forth to the world, would procure me honour, if not profit; or, at all events, set me on the high road to the temple of Riches and Fame.” Ah!

I said, "Some day or other they shall be proudest of the least cherished of their children;—some day or other they shall see that the plant which has grown up un-tended among the brambles shall rear up the loftiest head, and bear the fairest flowers in the garden.

And, after awhile, I said to myself, "But can I not do all this unaided? Can I not become great by the strength of my own energies?" And I thought that it would be a much prouder thing to work out my own triumph—no one abetting me, no one cheering me; and I asked myself, "Have I faith, and courage, and strength to accomplish this?" And my heart died within me when reflection answered, "No."

"Yet still," I thought, "I will start alone upon my pilgrimage. If I faint by the way-side, I can then cry aloud for assistance, or I can turn back, when I feel that I am too weak, and none will know of my failure. But let me start,—let me put forth my strength,—let me try my powers that I may know what they can accomplish, when greater trials call them forth;—let me try the temper of my intellect, with which, as with a sword, I am to carve my way to fortune—cutting a path where I find none." And when I had thus soliloquized, I went forth into the fields, intending calmly to sum up my resources.

When in motion I am always most sanguine

Had I remained at home I should have despaired; but now abroad in the meadows, the sun shining brightly over-head, the fresh breezes of early spring playing through my hair, as I bared my forehead to their influence, the little birds singing around me, and the trees putting forth their buds on every side, I felt full of hope and courage; and exulting in the consciousness of my strength, I cried aloud, "It is not possible that I should fail. Already do I feel myself triumphant."

My thoughts turned themselves towards the metropolis, and I resolved to start at once for London. It seemed to me that to will was to do, and, in the elevation of my spirits, I thought nothing of the means whereby this great end was to be accomplished. I was a hero, rejoicing in my might, and I condescended not to narrow details.

But when I returned to my home, I immediately began to particularize. I thought of my uncle, with whom I had once spent a vacation. He was a clergyman; he dwelt in the vicinity of London, and he was one of the most estimable men I had ever had the good fortune to be acquainted with. I knew that he would willingly receive me into his house for a few months, or, indeed, if I wished it, for as many years; and I now thought that nothing could be more easy than to take my manuscripts with me to London, and, whilst in my uncle's house, to superintend their passage through

the press, having first, of all, as a matter of course, sold them to a bookseller for a considerable sum. I little doubted but that my work would succeed, and I thought that its success would make my fortune. I fancied myself now taking a dwelling-house for myself, and sending forth work after work, whilst every succeeding effort is crowned with greater glory than the last, and wealth almost incalculable is poured into my over-brimming treasury. How little is there that ever comes to pass

*" In the fantastic projects and day-dreams
Of a raw, restless boy."*

I knew not then, as I do now, that authorship, though an excellent auxiliary reliance, is most precarious as a profession, and that he who trusts to his imagination for his daily bread, has built his house upon a hill of sand, which the winds of adverse circumstances, and even the regular approaches of the waves of Time, must render every day less secure, until the edifice is wholly swept away, and desolation has fallen upon its indweller.

I wrote to my uncle, and the answer that I received was full of kindness and affection. He said that he had long been wishing to see me, and that he would make immediate preparations for my reception ; adding, " You cannot think, my dear Gerard, how your cousin Emily is longing for

your arrival. She has not forgotten her old play-mate, and often speaks of her 'dear cousin Gerard,' wondering whether you ever think of *her*, and blessing your name, whenever it is mentioned. She is one upon whom kindness is never thrown away, and I need not tell you that she sends her best love."

"God bless thee, my sweet Cousin Emily," said I, as I folded up the letter.

Neither my father, nor my mother objected to my visit to London. The day for my departure was speedily agreed upon, and before a week had elapsed, it arrived.

On the eve of my departure, as I was making sundry necessary preparations for my journey, a servant came to the door of my apartment, and informed me that my father wished to see me. He was sitting in his little study alone, and, although the weather was very mild, there was a fire in the room, which blazed cheerfully through the dim twilight, and threw a bright, but flickering radiance upon the ceiling and the chamber-walls.

"Come hither, Gerard," said my father, "I would have some talk with you before you go."

I sat down on a little stool at my father's feet. He placed one of his hands upon my shoulder, and every now and then I felt his fingers playing with my hair. The light from the fire fell upon his face—it was a face such as we sometimes see

in the pictures of Domenichino—and I remarked that it was more than wontedly expressive of a heart overladen with sorrow.

“And so, Gerard, you are to leave us to-morrow?—You are going to your uncle Pemberton’s—a kind good man is your Uncle Pemberton—and I doubt not but that you will be very happy when you are there.”

“He has always been very kind to me,” said I; “and I love him as though he were—”

“*Your father,*” interrupted Mr. Doveton; “and well you may, when that father, my poor boy, has never been what a father should be to his son. Gerard, now tell me, truly, have you not often thought me a brute?”

There was something peculiarly touching in the tones of my father’s voice—so touching, that, when he asked me this strange question, my breast laboured with so much emotion, that all I could answer was, “My father.”

And then Mr. Doveton continued.—“My much-injured, yet most kind-hearted boy, I would not that you should go forth now, and leave your homestead, though only for a season, carrying with you an impression that you have left behind not one heart that, in thy absence, will ever turn towards thee—not one voice that will ever be lifted up in prayer for thy well-being. Oh, Ge-

rard! you do not, you cannot know, how very much I have loved you always.”

But, still, all that I could say was, “ My father, my dear father !”

“ Gerard, you have too much love, too much kindness, too much forbearance ;—indeed, you are too good for this cold, unloving world of ours. I have watched you—yes, my poor boy, I have watched you. Ever since I beheld, when you were quite a child, the first overflowing of your over-sensitive mind, mine eye has been often upon you when you knew it not. I have loved you in secrecy, and blessed you in silence, and communed with you from afar off. Oh, Gerard ! believe me, that always you have been the most cherished of my children.”

“ My father !—my kind, good father !”—and I laid my head upon the knees of my parent, and sobbed like a little child.

“ Do not weep, Gerard,—do not weep ; for I cannot go on, if you do. I was about to tell you, my poor boy, that I have *feared* to love you openly. I am a poor old man, broken down in body and in mind : I have not courage to resist, nor strength to contend, and repose is the one thing needful to me. And, therefore, Gerard, being conscious of my weakness, I have never set myself up against your mother. I dare not, Ge-

rard; for I confess that I am a coward;—not amongst men, not amongst men, my boy; for them I dare meet face to' face, and act as it becomes a man to act. But, with a woman, what can I do?—and the tongue of a woman, Gerard, is much sharper than the point of a sword."

Then, after a pause, he continued.—"More than once, my poor boy, have I spoken in your behalf, —not with authority, but with all meekness and forbearance,—entreating, and not commanding;—but I have always been answered with contumely; and if I have ever ventured to remonstrate, a gash has been made in my heart, and I have writhed beneath the torture of the incision. But I might have hardened myself to endure all this; I might have suffered much, very much, for your sake, had I thought that my sufferings would alleviate thine; but I well knew that *my* resistance would only expose *you* to greater wrongs, and that the longer I struggled in the net, the more impotent would my struggles become. Gerard, you well know your mother's excessive love for Arthur. In this one absorbing feeling every other principle is swallowed up: to this, she sacrifices duty, justice, mercy,—everything that adorns life. She is so jealous of any encroachment upon what she deems the privileges of her favourite, that all the love that is borne towards you, she looks upon as so much injury done to Arthur; and more than once, when

I have mentioned your equal title to her affections, and have enlarged upon your good qualities, she has said to me, "This is all your venom—you do it to lower Arthur in my estimation. You hate him,—I know you do;—you hate him because he is my favourite." And then I have marked her conduct towards you; and I have seen that she has been least kind when I have been most venturous in your behalf. And, therefore, Gerard, cruel as has been the necessity, I have been forced to love you in secret."

My heart was so full that I could not speak. My father laid his hand upon my head, and said, "Bless you, my boy! God bless you, my kind-hearted son!" Then there was a silence, which my father was the first to break.—"But you will forgive her, Gerard," said he;—"you will bear with her in patience and in meekness."

And I faltered out,—"I have borne, and will bear with her; nay, more, I do not condemn her; for how can I condemn that weakness which proceedeth from strength of love!"

Then my father said, "Gerard, you will write to me sometimes, and tell me what you are doing; and here, my boy, here is a purse for you, containing a small sum of money. I have brought you, by my indiscretions, into circumstances—"

"Oh! talk not of that, father."

"Well, my boy, in this purse you will find just

a hundred pounds; would that I had more to give you.—Nay, take it; I have saved it for you,—not robbed it from your brothers and sisters. It is yours; I have been hoarding it for some years; for you know I am almost a beggar, and that the money we live upon is your mother's."

I took the purse with some compunctions. My father bent down over me, as I sate at his feet, and kissed me upon my burning forehead. "Father! my dear father!" I cried, "may I prove myself worthy of your love!"

And my father said, "Gerard, an angel might lavish its best affections upon you,"

And thus we communed, till night descended upon us, interchanging our mutual assurances of love.

CHAPTER II.

THE SMOULDERING FIRE.

“ The royal instinct is but smouldering in him,
It will burst out anon.”

TALFOURD'S *Ion*.

THE public conveyance, which was destined to transport me to the metropolis, passed through Merry-vale about the hour of noon. I had, therefore, time, previous to my departure, for a visit to the cottage of the Moores. It was, indeed, with a heavy heart that I set forth to bid them farewell.

My way was through the fields, and over a steep heath-covered hill at the back of Mrs. Moore's cottage. When on the brow of this hill, I saw Michael, a little lower down, culling some specimens of heath ; for, as I have said before, Michael

was a botanist. He ran to meet me, and we sate down together upon a little spot of grass which was free from the prickly furze-bushes. "And so, Gerard, you are going to leave us?" said Michael.

"For a season—only for a season; I shall come back again, before long."

"We shall miss you very much," said my friend.

"And I you.—Oh, Michael! Michael! I knew not, until this moment, how very much I have loved Ella and you."

"Then why leave us?"

"Because the world beckons to me."

"And what mean you by *the world*, Gerard?—Methinks that, in a great city, you will lose sight of the world. The hills, the rivers, the woods, and the ocean,—are not these, the main parts of *the world*? Where will you see all these things in a more beautiful aspect than you see them *here*?—Not in London, Gerard. If the world be there, it is man's world—the world of art: here is the world of nature—the world made by *Him* who made *man*. But, Gerard, I can read your heart; you mean that *ambition* beckons to you."

"I do."

"And what hope you to obtain?"

"Happiness."

"And yet, Gerard, you might arrive at the same goal by a shorter and less hazardous path."

"And what is that path?"

“Content.”

“Ah ! Michael, it is easy to talk of such things ; we may read Jeremy Taylor on Contentedness, and persuade ourselves that a mean fortune is better than a good one ; but when we put our philosophy to the proof, we find that our faith is very weak, and that the theory, which is most beautiful in a book, is of all things the most impracticable in life.”

“Perhaps so,” said Michael, unwillingly.

“But, come, Michael, you talk about content : tell me now, do you know what it is ? have you ever felt it in yourself ?”

Michael turned aside his head, and replied, “Gerard, you banter me.”

“Nay, Michael, I but asked you a question ; I meant not to cause you pain.”

And Michael’s answer was similar to this,—
 “Nor have you, Gerard, save perhaps for a moment. But I will reply to your question freely ; I *am* content, that is to say, I am happy in the enjoyment of the present. You will ask me, what are my enjoyments. Gerard, they are around me everywhere ; they are many, they are great, they are imperishable ; they are comprehended in one word, and that one word is *nature*. What if I were richer, and greater, and more honoured amongst men ? would the sky above my head be more blue, or the vernal air more delicious ? would

the trees be more green, or the flowers more fragrant? would the birds sing to me in a more cheerful strain, or would the earth display her treasures with a more liberal hand? Dear Gerard, I have the faculty of enjoyment equally with the greatest prince. I can admire as well, I can love as deeply, I can hope as strongly as a monarch. Beauty, and love, and peace, what are they, but the food of happiness? If there be beauty around me, and peace within me, and love both around and within me, how can I do otherwise than account myself as one of the most blest."

"Ah! Michael," I exclaimed, with a deep-drawn sigh, when the calm, clear voice of my friend ceased to vibrate in my ear, — "ah! Michael, Michael, this is all very *splendid nonsense*."

Michael's cheeks were dyed with crimson, as he replied, "Nay, now you are unjust."

There was a pause; I pondered a little while, and then said, "Perhaps I am."

"I am very bold," returned Michael, "to speak in such language to you. I upbraid you, though not your equal; I dare to dictate, when you are older and wiser, and more exalted than myself; when I am a poor cottager, and you——"

"For heaven's sake, Michael, no more of this; I have wronged you grossly; I cannot bear to hear you talking thus about *my* superiority; I cannot indeed, for the very life of friendship is an

entire sense of equality; and, in God's name, Michael, what have you and I—philosophers as we are, and worshippers of nature—to do with that which is conventional? But you were right, very right, my friend; there *are* blessings scattered about the world everywhere, and he, who will, may find them. I think, Michael, that I have heard you *re*peat a passage out of Wordsworth,—a beautiful passage, which describes the benign influence of nature upon the soul of man. How runs it, Michael?"

And Michael repeated that beautiful passage in the *Lines, written near Tintern Abbey*,*—a passage, which few can peruse, without being wiser and better for the perusal.

"Methinks, Michael," said I, when the voice of my friend was still, "that there are *some* feelings expressed in these lines, into which you cannot know how to enter."

" * ——— Nature never did betray
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings."

“And what are they?”

“I am sure, Michael, that you know nothing about ‘evil tongues’—

*‘Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,’—*

“I know what these things are, Michael; and if nature has not been my solace, your love has been—yours and Ella’s.”

“True, Gerard, I have been very happy; my happiness has been greater than my deserts; but even we, in our sheltered nook, have known what it is to suffer:—we who have ventured little, have met with our mischances. It would be impossible, I think, for life to be one long season of summer weather.”

“Lawrence!”

“Ah! I mean that.—He has aspired, pray God he do not fall.”

“And dost thou never aspire, Michael?”

“Sometimes,”—and the eyes of my friend were fixed upon the ground as he spoke.

“And thou hast dreamt of greatness?” said I, interrogatively.

“Do you speak of day-dreams or visions of the night?”

“Of either or both, Michael; but first tell me, what are your sleeping fancies;—do you ever aspire in your sleep?”

"Sometimes I dream that I'm in the palaces of the great, and I see lofty edifices, and ornamented parks, and gardens with winding pathways and statues at every turn; and servants wait upon me in costly garments, and great men sit at my board, and I hear voices saying, 'Welcome home again, —welcome thou long absent one.'"

"Then you do aspire, and nobly too.—Your fledgling wings take a lofty flight."

"Nay, Gerard, these are but my dreams."

"And what is life but a dream?—the dream of a shadow, or the shadow of a dream—σκῆας οὐρα, as the old Greek has it."

Michael smiled, as he said, "Gerard, you forget that you are talking to a simple cottager who knows nothing of Greek."

"True; but I must tell you, Michael, that Zeno, the philosopher, was wont to say, that he could tell a man by his dreams, and so say I.—If you dream of palaces, I know that you aspire to be great."

"That is scarcely a fair conclusion," returned Michael. "Put case, that I were to dream of blood, does it follow that I aspire to be a murderer?"

"Michael, you have never dreamt of blood—not you. But now tell me another thing: far back as your memory can reach, what see you in the dim regions of the past?"

"Do not laugh at me, Gerard, if I say that memory faintly shadows forth the same images that I behold with greater distinctness in my dreams."

"Then you remember," said I, eagerly, "a time when your abode was a palace, when you were waited upon by menials in rich apparel, when you walked in magnificent gardens and beheld statues wherever you turned."

"Not exactly this," replied Michael; "but I think that I have a dim remembrance of a noble white house, of a very large garden intersected with many walks, and of liveried servants attending upon me; but, indeed, Gerard, it is more than probable that imagination, assuming the guise of memory, has put this trick upon me, and caused the vagaries of my brain to wear the aspect of gone-by realities."

"Do you often exercise your memory in this manner?—do you often endeavour to penetrate with a retrospective eye the obscurity of the past? Methinks, that you might remember something of the palaces wherein you dwelt before you came to this cottage at Grass-hill."

Michael seemed astonished by the eagerness with which I advanced these questions. "I cannot see that any profit would arise from such exercises of thought," said he. "What, if I were to perceive in the chaos and the darkness of the past a straggling ray of unexpected light, would it

make me any wiser, or better, or happier? I cannot see what I have to do with the dim past, when the bright future is before me."

"But upon your knowledge of the past, Michael, depends your ——" *future destiny*, I was about to say; but I checked myself suddenly, and continued, "Michael, on a moonless night have you ever left a lighted room to go forth into the outer darkness?"

• "Oh! yes—very often," replied Michael.

"And, upon your first going forth, all objects, even the greatest and the most prominent, have been enveloped in deep obscurity,—darkness has covered all things with a pall, and your eyes have been to you as the eyes of the blind."

"Yes—this is a common thing; but when—"

"Ah! you know what I would say;—when you have been a little time in the darkness, and your eyes have strained themselves awhile, objects begin to assume gradually a distinguishable form—the greater shapes, and then the lesser become visible one after another, as though a great mist had rolled away, and at length you proceed upon your journey, seeing all things as you see them in the twilight."

"Well, Gerard."

"As with the outer eye penetrating the darkness, so is it with the eye of memory when it would pierce the obscurity of the past. Doubtless,

Michael, if you were but to concentrate your thoughts, and to search diligently in the lumber-room of your memory, shapes would arise out of chaos, and dim ideas take a palpable form."

"And if I were to remember, Gerard—what then?"

"Perhaps you might remember things which will delight you."

"And perhaps things which would distress me; the chances are equal," replied Michael.

"Then you have balanced the probabilities," said I, fixing my eyes full upon Michael's face, as I spoke.

"Gerard, you read my heart," returned Michael, grasping one of my hands as he continued in a voice tremulous with excitement,—"you read my heart; and why should it be a sealed book to my friend? Gerard, I will talk to you of these things. I know not why I have not spoken out before, unless it be, that I have scarcely ventured even to commune with my own heart upon such strange matters as these; and that I have often doubted whether I am not, in reality, the victim of a diseased imagination. Gerard, I have sometimes thought that I was not born to be a dweller in a cottage."

"And I, Michael—I have thought so too. And Ella—ah! I see she is coming to us. Have you confided the secret of your suspicions to your sister?"

“No, Gerard.”

“Then it is time that you take counsel together: Ella, good morning; dear Ella! will you sit down beside me?”

And Ella seated herself beside me, saying sorrowfully, whilst the tears glistened in her blue eyes, and the little hand, which I held in mine, trembled. “And so, Gerard, this is to be the last time that you will sit thus, between Michael and me?”

“Nay, Ella, not the last time; that were indeed a gloomy foreboding.”

“But you will go away from us, and other friends will claim you, and you will forget the cottage children at Grass-hill.”

“Stay, Ella,” cried Michael, in an earnest tone, breaking in upon the discourse of his sister, “you do not really think that we were born to be cottage children.”

Ella made no answer. There was something in her brother's manner so different from his wonted calmness, that she looked into his face with a look of wonderment, which said plainly, “What mean you, Michael?” and then turning towards me, she said in a low voice, “what does he mean, Gerard—what does my brother mean?”

“Listen to me, Ella,” said I calmly, “and I will tell you what it is that affects him. But first of

all tell *me*, Ella, whether you have any dim remembrances floating in your mind, of any other state than your present one; do you remember any thing of your childish days, before you came to live at Grass-hill?"

"But very little," replied Ella, thoughtfully.

"And what is that little?"

"Oh! Gerard, it is so small a thing, that it is not worth mentioning; you must not smile if I tell you, nor think me a silly girl."

I shook my head, and Michael cried out in the voice of one who gasps for breath, "Speak, Ella, for God's sake, tell me what it is that you remember."

Ella looked at her brother, and the colour left her cheeks, when she saw that he was pale and trembling. But still she said, "I remember having rolled upon a cushion of crimson velvet, and having played with the tassels of gold bullion, which hung down from the corners of the pillow."

"And you do remember that," gasped Michael. —"Well, I remember the velvet cushion too. Ella, we will speak to our mother, and ask her——"

"Nay, not yet," I interrupted, in a dictatorial tone. "You should do nothing unadvisedly; abide your time, Michael; the truth will flash forth at last."

"It is strange," said Ella, "that we should both remember the same cushions of velvet. I cannot doubt the clearness of my memory; for when I was a very little child, I used to crow over the tassels of gold."

"Hear me, Ella—hear me, Michael. Strange truths are brought out by circumstances. You were not born to be cottage children. Ye think so. I think so, my friends; but time alone can irradiate the obscurity of your present position.—Be patient. I know that I am weak, but you shall have my weakness to assist you."

"You are not weak," cried Ella—"you are very strong; and you will assist us?"

"I will, Ella. Did you not once say that love makes the weakest very strong?"

"Oh! yes; I may have said so," replied Ella, "and if I did, I spoke but the truth."

"Then if love be strength, I am strong; and with my whole heart I will assist you."

"Oh! kind—but let us talk no more of these things," cried Ella; "think not of us,—you are about to leave us, and yet you will not talk of yourself."

"And why should I?"

"Oh! because I like it—because you are going into the great world, and some day you will be a great man."

"Nay, Ella—not I."

"Oh! you will—I am sure that you will.—Michael and I will glory in your fate—and we—even we, Gerard—shall be great, because we are your friends."

"Oh! yes, we shall be very proud of you," said Michael, lifting up his eyes from the ground, on which they had been some time fixed in most profound meditation.

"And what if I should fail?"

"Oh! you cannot fail," cried Michael; "if I were as sure as you, I—even I—would go forth into the world."

"You, Michael—why, *you* would be sure of success."

"And why?"

"Oh! because, Michael, you carry about with you a letter of recommendation, which must make you a welcome wherever you present yourself."

"And what is that letter?" asked my friend.

"*Your* *face*, Michael," said I.

And thus we communed, until it was time for me to depart; and then I rose up and descended the hill with Michael and Ella, that I might bid adieu to their mother in the cottage.

"But as we went I said to them, "Be patient, Michael—be patient, Ella, if you desire to fathom the mystery which envelopes, as both of you suspect, the history of your early days. You are

happy, very happy, in your ignorance, perhaps your knowledge will not be so blest."

"We will, Gerard, we will be patient."

"And silent."

"Yes, save to one another."

I received the parting benediction of Mrs. Moore, and I well remember that her last words were, "Oh! Mr. Doveton, if you love us, whom you leave behind you, in this cottage, as indeed I think you do, but too fondly, forget not that I have another son abroad in the world, wandering I know not where. Think of Lawrence — my poor lost, absent Lawrence! You may see him, you may find him, Mr. Doveton. Providence may direct your footsteps to the spot where my son is dwelling, or to the paths along which he is straying. When you visit strange places think of us and of our empty chair, and be watchful."

"Oh! yes, I will be very watchful. Who knows but that I may be an instrument in the hands of providence—."

"To save him a *second time*," added Ella.

CHAPTER III.

THE BROKEN REED.

' Life's winter now with double smart,
Sheds frost upon my head and heart ;
And thus I stand, a lonely tree,
All bare and desolate to see,
But worse within."

HORNE'S *Ballad of Delora.*

I STARTED upon my journey towards the metropolis, full of hope and full of regret. It was a fine clear April morning, and the country, through which I had to travel, was beautifully picturesque. Nature wore a cheerful aspect, and seemed to smile upon my expedition approvingly.

I do not think that any circumstance, worthy of note, occurred until we reached S——, where we stopped half an hour for supper, and supper to

an hungry traveller is an event of no little importance.

But I scarcely think that I should have recorded this event, had it not been productive of another, which being of infinite importance to my history, I shall lay before the reader in this chapter.

I had alighted from my seat upon the roof of the coach, and following the example of my fellow travellers, I had taken up my position at the supper-table, where I was devouring with all possible despatch rather more than a modicum of cold fowl, with sundry slices of ham to embellish it, when I heard the rattling of wheels, accompanied by the loud smacking of whips, and a chaise with four posters drew up before the door of the hotel. And then there was a ringing of bells, — “two pair of horses and chaise out directly,” was given in a fine barytone voice by the head-waiter, and immediately afterwards the same voice sinking down into a *soprano*, said, “Will you please, Sir, to alight for a moment, whilst the horses are being put to?” — a question which the traveller must have thought very superfluous, as he could not easily have transferred himself from one chaise to another, without performing the operation of ‘alighting.’

The gentleman, as it appears, did alight; and then there was a scene of confusion and dismay, for the post-boys, who had driven the last stage,

had applied for payment, and the traveller had discovered that he had not a single coin of any kind at that moment in his immediate possession.

Hearing the noise, my curiosity, I being then but a raw traveller, prevailed over my appetite, and I quitted the supper-room, that I might become a witness of the strange uproar in the hall. The post-boys were loud, imperative, and insolent. The waiters shrugged their shoulders; the landlord said that it was "very strange and very unfortunate," at the same time giving orders, in an under-key, that the horses should be taken back to the stable, whilst I looked on with a beating heart, little thinking, as did all the denizens of the hotel, that the moneyless traveller was an impostor.

I must describe the individual as I saw him then. He was about forty years of age; he was tall; and his person was enveloped in the ample foldings of a black-cloak, fastened at his breast by a large clasp, which, from its brightness, I took to be of jet, and surmounted by a deep cape of the richest black velvet. He wore a high-crowned hat, with a brim of more than ordinary dimensions; and this was all of his apparel that I could see. But his face—oh! I never beheld a face with such a touching expression of utter hopelessness as the traveller's countenance betrayed. It haunted me for days after. It was a thin, pale face, almost

perfectly elliptical, and the features thereof were small and delicate, almost to effeminacy, saving the eyes, which were dark and full, shaded with long black lashes, and peculiarly soft in their expression. It was, indeed, in its mere lineaments, a very beautiful face; but it was that touching look of meek despondency, that calm aspect of patient sorrow, which appealed irresistibly to my heart, and caused me both to pity and to love at first sight the afflicted stranger.

And there he stood in the centre of an insolent crowd of menials, suspected, pointed at, derided. He appeared to be quite lost, quite paralyzed by the strangeness of his situation; as helpless and as destitute of resources as an infant in this trying position. He looked around him, and he saw nothing but strange, sneering faces; then he lowered his eyes, and his lips trembled, and his whole countenance ~~weaked~~ convulsively; and then he drew the folds of his cloak more closely around him, and at length said in a voice of despair, raising his eyes as he spoke, "What am I to do?"

There cannot possibly be conceived any language more expressive of entire hopelessness than this. It is the language which the Greek tragedian puts into the mouths of his desolate mourners; *Τι δρᾶσω*; "What shall I do?"

I could not resist this appeal. There was something so plaintive in the voice, and so de-

sponding in the aspect of the speaker; something so very wretched in his whole appearance, and so truly pitiable in the words he had uttered, that my heart was touched, my sympathies were awakened, and every generous impulse of my soul was suddenly called into action. I pitied, I loved the stranger; I saw that he was a man of sorrows, and I loved him for the meekness and the patience that I could read in his pale face. "And is this man," I asked myself, "for the want of a few vile coins, to be insulted by every groom in the yard, every waiter and tapster in the house?"

I could not restrain my impulses. It was the one desire of my soul to rescue the afflicted stranger; no scruples of delicacy, no conventional misgivings interposed to chill the ardour of my emotions. I did not pause, I did not hesitate, that I might weigh nice distinctions; but I burst through the crowd of astonished menials, and laying my hand upon the arm of the stranger, I cried out in an eager, but tremulous voice, "Can I help you, Sir?—can I aid you in this embarrassment?"

And then, not waiting for an answer from the stranger, I turned round, and assuming my manliest deportment, I addressed myself to the importunate postilions, saying, "What is it that you require from this gentleman?"

"Six-and-thirty shillings for the posting, Sir,—beside——"

"The value of your own services," said I, interrupting the spokesman.—"Now just have the goodness to be quiet, and you shall have whatever you demand."

And then I addressed myself again to the traveller, in whose countenance wonderment was now mingled with despondency, and I said to him, "Come aside, Sir, and leave these importunate grooms."

The stranger appeared scarcely to comprehend me; but following my example rather than my instructions, he walked with me to the further end of the passage, leaving landlord, waiters, and post-boy, staring at one another with expressions of countenance in which astonishment was mingled with distrust.

"You will excuse my frankness I hope, Sir," said I; "but being assured that there is some mistake here, I venture to offer my assistance. Can I help you, Sir?—I am longing to help you."

"Can you tell me what I am to do?" said the stranger in a low, heart-broken voice. "Every moment of delay is a torture to me; yet I do not know what is to be done."

"Oh! take my purse, Sir,—I have plenty of money," and I held out the cash as I spoke.

But the stranger extended not his hand. He looked at me, and his eyes glistened with tears,

and I heard him say in an under tone, "She will die; and I shall not be in time."

"Oh! let me implore you to take this," I exclaimed, again extending my purse. "It is true that I am a stranger and a boy; but do not, therefore, despise my assistance."

There was an earnestness in my manner, and a sincerity in the tones of my voice, which found their way to the stranger's heart. "Ah!" said he; "it is only in boyhood that we are thus generous;" and then he sighed.

"But may I not help you?"

"You may, my young friend—you may. I see that your assurances are genuine;—you wish to serve me;—I read it in your face: but what a strange person you must think me—to set out upon my journey without money, and *such* a journey. God grant that I may not be too late after all!"

"Shall I pay the post-boys, and order fresh horses?"

"Yes—do—I am not used to these things; but stay, first tell me your name."

"Gerard Doveton."

"And your address?"

"Oh! I will give it to you presently, Sir; but first of all let me order your horses, that no time may be lost."

"Ah! yes I must lose no time, or my poor mother will be dead."

"And he is on his way to see a dying mother," thought I, as I ran with all speed along the entrance passage of the hotel, to settle the claims of the post-boys, and to order out a relay of horses.

I heard the landlord say to the head-waiter—
"A job chaise and no luggage—don't like the looks of that at all."

And will you not order out the horses, then?" said I.

"Not if the *gentleman* (laying an emphasis on the word) have no money; I can't afford it, Sir;" and the landlord would have added more, had I not interrupted him, exclaiming,

"For God's sake be quick with the horses! I have money—money in abundance, and I will pay you for them. In mercy's name let me intreat you to lose no time."

The landlord smiled, and there was that in his face which said plainly enough, "You are a dupe;" but he ordered out the horses, and then turning towards me, he said, "You are a generous young gentleman; may you never repent of your generosity."

I rejoined the stranger, whom I found leaning against one of the pillars of a portico in front of

the hotel. It was a beautiful starry night, and the traveller was standing bare-headed ; his dark hair flung back from off his brows, gazing with an upturned face at the serene heaven above him. "And perhaps," I heard him say in a voice of anguish,—“perhaps she has joined them already in their bright habitations *there*.”

When he beheld me again standing beside him, the stranger passed his hand athwart his face, as though he were endeavouring to dispel the wild fancies which were crowding upon his brain ; and then with a calmer aspect, he bent his eyes upon me, and said,—“I hope that you do not think me an impostor as do these people of the hotel.”

“An impostor ! God forbid that I should think so. Oh ! Sir, I read faces too well, young as I am, to think you an impostor.”

“And yet you might often be deceived,” said the stranger sorrowfully ; and then he added,—“I forgive these people—without money, without papers, without luggage, without even a card of address—coming to a strange place in a hack-chaise, which I cannot pay for ; ’tis not wonderful that the people should suspect me.”

“But your face, — your appearance, — your voice—”

“Ah !” returned the stranger ; “you are young and credulous,—many an arrant rogue has had a better face,—a finer cloak, and a meeker voice

than mine. But I thank you for judging thus kindly of me. You are a generous,—a noble-hearted youth. With appearances sadly against me, suspected by those who are older and have more knowledge of the world, though perhaps not of the *heart*, than yourself,—an entire stranger as I am, in a strange place, friendless and alone, you come forward and offer me your purse without even asking my name.”

I was silent, and the traveller continued. “The time may come when I shall be able to repay you for the great service you have done me to-day. I am neither poor, nor unknown, nor unrespected. It is probable that, had I mentioned my name to these people, who now take me for a cheat, I should have met with the most abject servility in the place of derision and insult,—that is to say, if they had given credit to my story, which, as I have no means of proving its veracity, these suspicious worldlings might not have done, any more than they now believe me to be a gentleman.”

“With all their knowledge of the world, they are fools,” said I.

The stranger smiled, and said,—“God grant that you may abide in your present faith.”

Knowing that there was but brief time allowed me for prolonging this conversation, I now took out my pocket-book from one of my inner garments, and counting out bank-notes to the amount

of thirty pounds, I put them into the stranger's hand. "But your address," said he,—“give me your address.”

I wrote my Uncle Pemberton's address upon a leaf, which I tore out of my pocket-book. The stranger read it, and folded it carefully up; and then said to me—“But *mine*, my young benefactor.—It is strange that you should not have asked my name and history, before you advanced this loan.”

“I desire to know neither the one nor the other,” said I,—“if *you* desire to keep them secret. Your *face* is sufficient security for the repayment of this money!”

“You are too full of faith, too credulous,” replied the stranger; “but you shall know both my name and the history of my misadventures. My name is *Anstruther*, and I live at Charlton Abbey, about three miles from M——, in H——shire.”

He then proceeded to inform me that he was on his way to Bath, to visit a dying mother, of whose sudden illness he had only gained intelligence that morning—that he had started from the Abbey in his own travelling carriage, taking with him his valet, an old and confidential servant—that by the carelessness of the postilions he had been overturned, two stages before S——, by which accident his carriage was fractured, and his

servant dangerously injured—that he had left his valet behind at an inn, and proceeded in a post-chaise, forgetting, in the lethargy of grief which enveloped him, to ask his servant who was acting as pay-master of the journey, for the travelling-money with which they had started;—that at the last posting-house he had found two sovereigns in his waistcoat pocket, with which he had paid for the horses that had drawn him there; and that it was not until his arrival at S——, that he had discovered, to his dismay, that he was penniless. “I have been so long unused,” concluded Mr. Anstruther, “to act for myself in these petty affairs, that when I am thrown upon my own resources, I am actually as helpless as a child. All the minor details of business are indeed mysteries to me; and I am as unfit to prosecute a journey by myself as the veriest infant from the nursery. But what is this to you, my young friend? It now only remains for me to thank you. Be sure that you shall hear from me soon; we will be friends. I want a friend, for I am almost alone in the world.”—And as he said this, I could see, by the light which streamed from an over-hanging lamp, that every muscle of the traveller’s face was convulsed, and that a large solitary tear was rolling down his cheek on either side.

He raised his hand to his face, and dashed away the tear; then he continued, in a broken voice—

" 'Tis a dangerous thing to love deeply. Have you a father, my young friend ? "

I replied in the affirmative, and the traveller returned, " Ah ! and I once had *children*." His voice faltered so much that the last word was scarcely audible. Then, after a brief pause, he continued, in a calmer tone, as though he were communing with himself—" And yet 'tis a proud fate to die in the splendour of one's innocence."

And then the traveller, throwing back his cloak, laid one hand upon my shoulder, whilst with the other he pointed upwards to the starry heaven, and said, in a deep solemn voice, the tones of which I shall ever remember, " They are there—all three ! "

Then, with a more rapid utterance, he proceeded thus—" They are *all* there—methinks I see them looking down upon me, like cherubim—'tis very dangerous, believe me, to love over-much—"

" Yet, 'tis pleasant—"

" Ah ! but death comes, and then the soul is made dark for ever—"

Then suddenly checking himself, he said, " I have talked to you this night, as I have not talked for many years, and yet you stand before me a stranger."

There was a brief silence, which Mr. Anstruther

was the first to break. "My young friend," he asked,—“how old are you?”

“Eighteen.”

“Eighteen,” the traveller muttered to himself—
“*Eighteen*,—the age of my first-born.”

I was beginning to think that the intellect of my new friend was slightly disordered by much suffering; for there was a strangeness, indeed a wildness in his manner and his aspect, whilst speaking of his children in heaven, which could not have failed to inspire a looker-on with this suspicion—when one of the inn-waiters came up to tell me that the coach by which I came was about to start, and that the driver was already on the box.

“Farewell then, Mr. Anstruther,” I exclaimed, “God grant that when you arrive at your journey’s end, you may be spared the trial you anticipate.”

“Bless you—God bless you!”—cried Anstruther, grasping me very fervently by the hand,—“my blessings go with thee through the wide world,” and in a minute I was rattling along the streets of S—, behind four rapid-going horses.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN OF IMPULSE, AND THE MAN OF SENSE.

‘ Within the surface of the fleeting river,
The wrinkled image of the city lay
Immoveably unquiet ’—

SHELLEY.

“ I have fed
Perhaps too much upon the lotos-fruits
Imagination yields, fruits which unfit
The palate for the more substantial food
Of our own land—reality.”

LONDON.

DAY was just beginning to dawn as we entered the great metropolis. “ An eager and a nipping air,” was abroad, and I felt as though I would willingly have exchanged my then passive mode of locomotion, for an active one, which might have imparted some warmth to the cold blood that was stagnating in my veins. Yet, in spite of my uneasy condition, I could not help contemplating the silent city—its deserted streets, and its smokeless

houses, with certain poetical transports of delight, and I repeated, time after time, to myself, this passage from one of Wordsworth's sonnets,

"The city now does like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning."

and looking upon all things around me with the eye of a philosopher and a poet, I soon forgot that the air was cold, and that my limbs were almost benumbed.

As we passed the park-gates, I, in my ignorance, said to the coachman, "Do we go over Westminster bridge?"

The man smiled, and replied in the negative. I was disappointed, for I had often desired to behold the effect which Wordsworth has described in that noble sonnet "Composed upon Westminster Bridge," from which I have just quoted a passage.

But when we had reached Charing Cross, the coachman, pointing with his whip said, "That, Sir, is the way to the bridge?"

"Oh! then I will alight here," said I, unable to resist the temptation; "you will take my luggage on to the coach-office, and I will call for it in the course of the morning."

The driver pulled up his horses, and I gave him half-a-crown—more than he was entitled to, it is true; but boys always give double, thinking that

it makes them look like men; besides, I was so glad to quit the vehicle, upon which I had travelled nearly two hundred miles, that I believe, in the plenitude of my joy and gratitude, I would have given him a guinea, had he asked it.

“And this is just the time,” said I to myself, as I hurried past Whitehall, “the very hour that the poet has described—and such a morning too!—the sun rising gloriously.—Oh! yes, it will be a noble sight.”

Nor was I disappointed. I stood upon the bridge, and looking eastward, I leaned over its balustrades, in a mood of intense admiration. Red, bright, and unclouded, rose the sun over the great city, bathing houses and churches and bridges in its light; and vessels with their bare masts lay quietly by the river side, and every here and there was a light in a chamber window, which told that its inmate was asleep. There was no bustle in the streets, no stir upon the waters; the mighty Babel was in profound repose, like a Leviathan taking its rest, and there was something majestic and awful in the stillness, which filled my breast with solemn emotion, and disquieted me with a strange sense of mingled adoration and fear. The tall chimnies of the manufacturer sent forth no smoke; the vanes upon the church spires glittered, but no sound issued from their belfries; the bridges spanned the river with their arches, but the mul-

titude traversed them not; and the river flowed tranquilly on, "gliding at his own sweet will," neither ruffled by a single oar, nor cloven by a single prow.

And there I stood leaning over the bridge, and repeating Wordsworth's magnificent sonnet. Oh! never at any time have I felt the truthfulness of this great master's poetry more deeply than I did at the hour, of which I am now writing;

" Silent, bare
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky!
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air ;"—

and then, when I came to the two last lines, my eyes filled with tears, and my voice faltered, and my heart was full of emotion—

*" Dear God, the very houses seem asleep,
And all that mighty heart is lying still."*

How beautiful! I cannot, even now, that the enthusiasm of my boyhood is somewhat tempered by years, repeat the noble words of this poem, with a still heart and a tearless eye, and a voice unbroken by emotion. But then, in my youth's summer, in all the freshness of my young feelings, the warmth of my young heart, susceptible even to an intensity that was painful—with a soul, which had long sustained itself upon the food of

love and admiration, it is not strange that with such a scene before my eyes, and such poetry vibrating in my ears, I should have been seized with a transport of excitement, absorbing every faculty of soul and sense, and making me like one of the abstracted.

But anon, I felt a hand upon my shoulder, and I heard a voice, whose tones were familiar to me though I had not listened to them for years. I thought that I could not be in error,—those accents, those words, they were stamped with an individuality, which it were quite impossible that I should mistake. "If Gerard Doveton has no desire to continue his dreams in the lap of old Father Thames, I would recommend him to quit his dangerous position upon the parapet of Westminster Bridge."

It was actually my old friend Smith. "And what has brought you here?" I exclaimed; at the same time grasping him very cordially by the hand, and leaping down from my seat upon the parapet, for I was quite over-joyed to see my old school-fellow and adviser.

"And may I not ask the same question," replied Smith, "and with every probability of receiving a more whimsical answer than I give."

"Very likely—I was always whimsical—and I am just as strange a creature as ever."

"So I perceive—but I will satisfy your cu-

riosity without delay. This happens to be Easter vacation, and therefore, I am absent from the University."

"Ay—but what brings you out at such an early hour when every body else is in bed?"

"Inclination," replied Smith. "I am always an early riser; but in London more early than in the country; for the atmosphere of a city is purer in the morning than it is later in the day; besides, the streets are less crowded, there is nothing to impede my progress, and I incur no risk of being demolished by carts, coaches, and brewers' drays. I have been as far as the Elephant and Castle, and I am now on my way home to Gower Street."

"Well," said I, "you seem to have good reasons for indulging in *your* morning walks."

"Yes—besides, I am 'reading for honours,' and I fag all through the middle of the day. The morning I devote to exercise—the evening to society, and by thus dividing my time, I find that I can study to my heart's content, without in any way injuring my health."

"For my part, I can do most at night," said I, "the 'midnight oil' for me."

"Bad—very bad," said Smith, "*it makes one dream*; and there's nothing in the world so bad for the health as dreaming. Dreams, too, unsettle the mind—never read at night, Doveton; take my

advice and study in the morning—but now tell me what brought you here.”

I satisfied the curiosity of my friend, and when I had done so, he at first seemed inclined to laugh, but his face presently assumed a graver aspect, and he said to me, “Do you know, Doveton, that you have done a very silly thing?”

“If I have, then it is your fault; for you it was who told me to read Wordsworth.”

“That’s too good: you might say, with as much truth, that it’s Mr. Wordsworth’s fault for writing the sonnet. But let me advise you, never again to part company from your luggage.”

“My luggage!—it’s all safe. Do you think that my luggage is in jeopardy?”

“Certainly I do;—where is it to be left?”

“At the coach-office.”

“*What* coach-office, Doveton?”

This was a question which I could not answer. I must have looked very silly, as I stammered out, “Why, I don’t know.”

“Then let me advise you to ascertain, without delay. Come, Doveton, I will give you my assistance; for, without it, the further you go, the more inextricably will you involve yourself in difficulties. By what coach did you come from Merry-vale?”

I thought a little, and then replied: “By the Independent—no, by the Auxiliary—or else by the Defiance, or the Quicksilver.”

"Or the Times, or the Red Rover, or the Celebrity;" said Smith. "You are very perspicuous in your explanation, and seem, upon the whole, my dear fellow, to know very much about the business. However, I will soon discover for you. Was it a mail?"

"No, I don't think so; and yet I rather think that it was."

"Very clear, certainly," observed Smith; "you do think so, and yet you don't. But tell me, where did you sit?"

"Behind the coachman."

"You could not easily have sate *before* him, unless you had ridden postilion," returned Smith;—"but in front, or at the back of the coach?"

"In front."

"And were there any passengers behind?"

"Yes, the guard."

"And no one else?"

"I really don't know; I did not trouble myself to inquire; and I was looking forward all the way."

"But now tell me," cried Smith, retaining his patience with a constancy that was truly admirable, "do you remember where they stowed your luggage?"

"Yes," said I; "the guard told me that he had put it in the *hind-boot*."

"Then," cried Smith, "you didn't come by the

mail;" and having established this point, he continued to interrogate me concerning the line of road we had travelled, the time of starting, the place we had supped at, and sundry other details of this kind; and after a tedious cross-examination, he contrived to discover, from my answers, which were not very explicit, what coach it was that had transported me to the metropolis. This was the process, which Smith called "putting two and two together;" an operation which, at that period of my life, I was very little competent to perform.

But Smith was right; and he conducted me to the coach-office where my luggage actually was—at least, a portion of it; for here I discovered another instance of Smith's sagacity, some dishonest person having appropriated to himself my hat-box and a little *sac-de-nuit*, in which was a single change of linen, and—wretch that I was—*my manuscripts!*

I was horror-struck. This was an irreparable loss. If they had taken all my money and my clothes, I might have borne the privation with philosophy; but, to take my manuscripts!—is it possible to conceive any more grievous calamity befalling a young author? I turned quite sick,—my heart died within me, and my head swam dizzily round. It was like the bursting of a great crucible at the very moment that the alchymist

sees within it the realization of a life's dreams: and this was I now destined to endure.

Smith saw me turn deadly pale, and felt me lean heavily against him; for I could scarcely support myself in this extremity, so oppressive was the sensation of sickness that came over me when I was made acquainted with the extent of my loss.

"What ails you—are you ill?" asked Smith.

"My *sac-de-nuit*," was all that I could answer.

"Could not have held much," said Smith, laconically, finishing the sentence that I had commenced.

"Oh, yes!—it was full of manuscripts; the stores of a whole life were garnered in those pages."

"*Manuscripts!*—of your own composition?"

"Yes," said I.

"Never mind, then," cried Smith; "I'll answer for it, that they were not worth much, if you wrote them all yourself, Doveton."

"Oh! you don't know; there were nine hundred pages at least. What am I to do?"

"The loss is a gain, depend upon it," replied Smith; "they could not have stolen anything more useless than the manuscripts of a boy of eighteen."

"So you think, but *I* don't; at all events, they were the best I had got."

"As the Irishman said of his bad cough;—but, seriously, does the loss afflict you?"

"Grievously!"

"Do you value your manuscripts at ten shillings?" asked Smith.

"Now you are laughing at me!—I would not have lost them for ten times ten pounds."

"Which is much more than they are ever likely to fetch.—But here, you, sir," calling to a porter, who was loitering in the coach-yard: "This gentleman has lost a little carpet-bag, and he will give you half-a-guinea to find it."

The man touched his hat, promising to use his best endeavours, whilst Smith said to me, in an under-tone, "Ten to one, that he has got it himself: it is a common trick of these fellows to secrete small parcels, that they may get the rewards that are offered for them."

This assurance—for I always believed Smith,—reanimated my drooping spirits; and saying that I would call again on the following day to inquire after my lost property, I ordered a coach, and having caused the remainder of my luggage to be stowed therein, I was about to enter the vehicle, when Smith said to me, "Whither are you going?"

"Wherever you like," said I.

"Your uncle lives at S——; does he not? You had better, I think, breakfast in town, and then go down to S—— by a stage. Are you hungry?"

"I was," said I, "before I discovered the loss of my *sac*."

"Suppose that we breakfast together?"

"I shall be delighted."

"Well, then," said Smith; "we will leave your luggage at the office where the S—— coaches start from, taking care to *book* all your parcels, which will cost you six-pence for the three; and having done this, we will go and breakfast at the Tavistock."

"And where is that?"

"In Covent Garden,—the market is worth seeing, particularly to-day; Doveton;" and we started off for the S—— coach-office.

As we were breakfasting, I told Smith what had happened to me upon my journey, making a very excellent story of my adventure with the *soi-disant* Anstruther, and I concluded by asking my companion his opinion of the whole transaction.

"I think," said Smith, "that you have been much more generous than discreet. You ~~will~~ never see your money again."

I made a point of always confiding in Smith's sagacity, but I must confess, that on the present occasion my faith tottered no little, and that I answered, with a sceptic smile, "You don't really think so, do you?"

"Yes," said Smith; "I think that he has duped you."

"But he has given me his name and address."

"Nothing more easy," returned Smith, "when there are so many names in the blue book."

"But his manners—and his appearance—and his voice,—I am quite sure that he is a gentleman."

"Do you read the newspapers?" asked Smith.

"Never."

"I thought not, or you would have seen that young gentlemen of 'fashionable exterior, and remarkably prepossessing appearance,' are brought up every day in the week, except Sunday, before the police magistrates for swindling."

"Nay, now, you *are* laughing, at me," said I.

"Not at all," said Smith; "but I'll presently convince you,—here, waiter, bring me the *Chronicle*."

The paper was brought, and Smith spread it out before him. "I thought I should find a case in point," said he.

And Smith read.—"Marlborough-street.—Yesterday morning, a fashionably drest young man, who gave his name Charles Amelius Somerset, with a mild, intelligent countenance, and a very fine head of light-brown hair, was brought before the sitting magistrate, charged with committing a fraud of a novel and unprecedented description."

"Well," said I, "that may be all very true; but I would stake my existence upon the honesty

of Mr. Anstruther. Besides, it is very improbable——”

“Oh! nothing is improbable, Doveton;—read the Police Reports, and you’ll think nothing improbable; things happen every day in London, that would be condemned as monstrous and unnatural, if they were met with in the pages of a novel.”

“We shall see, Smith. Truth is the daughter of time; I don’t tremble for my money.”

“I would not give you five per cent for your chance.”

“Nor I take ninety.”

“What name did the stranger give you,” asked Smith.

“*Anstruther*; and he said that he lived at Charlton Abbey, near M——, in H——shire.”

“And there is a Mr. Anstruther of Charlton Abbey in H——shire. There, you may see it in the Court Guide.—London residence, Park-street, Grosvenor Square; but I don’t think that you have seen him.”

“Ah! well,” I said, with a deep sigh, — “if I am duped, I will burp my Lavater.”

CHAPTER V.

RELIGION AND THE DOMESTIC CHARITIES.

“ The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning’s solid dignity.”

WORDSWORTH.

My uncle Pembrerton was a clergyman. He had the living of a large parish just six miles distant from the metropolis. He was a widower, and he had one child,—‘one little ewe lamb,’—my COUSIN EMILY.

It would not be easy to conceive a more estimable character than my uncle’s. A minister of the Church of England, his zeal stood not in the way of his toleration; he was zealous without being a zealot; and his charity was so closely interwoven

with his faith, that the deeper his knowledge, and the stronger his conviction, of the truths of the gospel became, the more necessity did he see for conciliation and forbearance, the more kind, and exculpatory, and forgiving towards others was this lowly-minded servant of Christ. Not his was the arrogant, Pharisaical creed, which, assuming all perfection to itself, condemns with a wide-spreading condemnation the myriads not within its little pale, and seems by the constancy of its self-gratulations to glory in rather than to weep over its exclusiveness. Not his the presumptuous egotism which sees no signs of grace, but in itself; that stern, censorious morality, which forgetteth the commandment, "*Judge not.*" My uncle walked erectly himself, but he had a heart to pity, and a hand to raise, and a voice to comfort, the fallen. He subjected not the lives of other men to the severe standard of rectitude to which he conformed his own, but seeking for good in everything, and rejoicing wherever he found it, he endeavoured to work out the redemption of his fellow-creatures more by filling their hearts with peace than by striking terror into their souls,—more by inviting them to hope than by driving them into despair,—more by dwelling upon the glory, and the infinite bliss of the forgiven, than by descanting upon the torments of the condemned. His was indeed a religion of love; his heart overflowed with sympathy; and

in truth may it be written of him, as it has been written of another good man, that "he never conversed with a fellow-creature without feeling a wish to do him good."*

Simple in his manners, condescending to all, calm, contemplative, and yet cheerful, an unkind word or a harsh tone, never escaped from this good man's lips. He was so little selfish, that in the joys and sorrows of those around him, he always forgot his own; making it the study of his life to strike sunshine into the hearts of the afflicted, to heal the sick, to enrich the poor, and to assist the heavy-laden upon their journey, his existence was one continued scene of good deeds and sanctifying charities. Courtied by the rich, and almost worshipped by the poor, the constant theme of praise and admiration as he was, no particle of pride ever entered into his nature; no feelings of self-congratulation brought a smile of triumph to his lips. He asked, he desired no extraneous rewards. To do good—for good's sake, was the full extent of his ambition, and if he were rewarded by the prayers and the blessings of the poor, filling his soul with serene delight, there was no self-complacency in his enjoyment, for he only regarded himself as an instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and when others gave thanks

* David Hartley.

to him, he offered up his thanksgivings to God.

My uncle Pemberton was wise as he was good ; he might have adorned, had it so pleased him, the foremost ranks of philosophical literature. " He counted it not profaneness to be polished with human reading," nor did he think that the writings of the heathen philosophers ought to be sealed books to a Christian divine. Indeed, he esteemed the dialogues of Plato next in order to the sacred scriptures, and he was wont to say that many of the first principles of Christianity are discernible in the doctrines of Socrates. Neither did he despise the lighter literature of the day ; for he very much delighted in poetry, especially when interwoven with sound philosophy, as in the writings of William Wordsworth ; and even the pages of the novelist were frequently resorted to by my uncle, for he was of opinion, that no work, which increases our knowledge of the human heart, and awakens kindly emotions and generous sympathies in our breasts, can fail of doing good to the reader. The human heart, indeed, to Mr. Pemberton was a volume which he delighted to study, and although, perhaps, the kindliness of his nature caused him to dwell upon and to analyze the virtues more intently than the vices of his fellows, it may well be said that his knowledge of humanity was consummate ; for, after all, though a Rochefoucault

or a Byron, or a Crabbe, may teach a different lesson, that philosophy, which is the most cheerful, is at the same time the most true, and there is more wisdom, seeing that good and evil are commingled in the hearts of men, to look upon the good as a covering to the evil, than to regard the evil as the annihilator of the good. "The heart of man," said my uncle Pemberton, "is as a garden, where noxious weeds are intermixed with the sweetest flowers; and it is better to admire the garden for the sake of the flowers, than to condemn it because of the weeds. We should forgive the frowardness of our neighbour's heart for the slender vein of goodness that runs through it, even as God would have spared Sodom for the sake of ten just men."

My uncle began life in the army; at the age of sixteen he was a young cornet of horse; and he had followed the profession of arms for a period of nearly five years, when he abandoned the camp for the temple, at the solicitation of an aged mother, whose desire it was to behold her son a minister of the gospel before she died. Had it not been for this, Mr. Pemberton's name might have adorned the military annals of the country; for, like David Hartley, "he considered the moral end of our creation to consist in the performance of the duties of life attached to each particular station, to which all other considerations ought to

be inferior and subordinate, and consequently, that the rule of life consists in training and adapting our faculties, through the means of moral habits and associations to that end." * Had he continued to carry arms in the service of his king, certain am I, that he would have exemplified the character of the "happy warrior," which Wordsworth has so nobly portrayed in a poem, which ought to be stamped upon every soldier's memory in characters never to be effaced. The same good man would my uncle have been in the barrack-room, that he was at the altar, equally obedient unto God, and equally full of love towards men. No adverse circumstances could have shaken the integrity, nor any evil associations defiled the purity, of his mind. "Crowned with inward glory," he might have walked through the dark places of the world, and never once dashed his foot against a stone.

It is a pleasant task to analyse a good man's character, and to write of a good man's deeds. And pleasant too is it, though in a less elevated degree, to portray even the outward peculiarities of one so worthy to be remembered—the external aspect of the temple, where so much virtue was enshrined. Imagine then, reader, a tall, well-built man, about five and forty years of age, with

* See the Life of Hartley, appended to his Works.

a face, which it would be almost impossible to look upon without loving its possessor. He had a high smooth forehead, "profound though not severe," and the little hair, that surmounted it, was of a silvery grey colour, which had once, perhaps, been light brown; for such would have been most in harmony with the fair complexion, and the mild grey eyes and the meek intelligence of my uncle's face. Extreme simplicity, resulting from the exquisite adaptation of all its parts to one another, gave a sublime aspect to his countenance, and saved his features; which were more remarkable for grace and delicacy than for strength, from the feebleness which often proceeds from a want of decision, in their outlines. Gentleness and benignity, and a serene thoughtfulness were written in legible characters upon a face, which was, "readable as an open book;" and if ever there were a loveable expression of countenance, it was that of my uncle, when he smiled. It was altogether a saint-like face, and it was the face of a saint-like man—of one whom Caspar Lavater would have called an *apostolical* man—a man high above his fellows, as the apostles were, at the dawn of Christianity.

But my cousin Emily—what shall I say of *her*? My beautiful little cousin, with her laughing eyes, and her rosy lips, which had a smile on them all day long. Oh! how palpably her image rises up

before me, as I beheld her, at the time of which I am now writing, in all the grace and purity of extreme youth, full of life, and love, and cheerfulness, the gladdest spirit that ever moved along the earth, shedding sunshine all around her, and making music wherever she went. She was barely thirteen years of age, and the prettiest little creature in the world, with her nut-brown hair, soft, glossy and profuse, streaming adown her back and clustering over her shoulders, with her large dark grey eyes, lucid with love and merriment, and her dimpling blushing oval cheeks, which invited you every moment to kiss them, and her full lips which pouted, when you did, with an expression of mock gravity, which was at beautiful discord with the mirth swimming in her eyes, though she would endeavour with all her might to frown, and to look angry—a most abortive endeavour, always,

For lo! directly after

It bubbled into laughter.

and my cousin Emily would cry out “You naughty man!” and shaking her bright ringlets, run away with the swiftness of a fawn, her little feet gliding along as though they scarcely touched the ground—my playful, dear cousin Emily!

She was the sweetest tempered creature in the

world, and was never so happy as when she was doing some little act of kindness towards another. To hear you express a wish was sufficient; off she would run up-stairs, or down-stairs, for a book, across the lawn for a flower, or into the garden for a handful of fruit, singing all the way as she went like a bird, and laughing, when you told her upon her return, that she was "a dear, good, kind-hearted creature, for taking so much trouble." And how well she knew the tastes of every one—how well she knew what little offering would be most acceptable to each. If an unseen hand had been at work for you in the house, you knew, at once, that it was my cousin Emily's. If you loved flowers, you would be sure to find a fresh nosegay in your plate when you took your seat at the breakfast-table—and all your favourite flowers would certainly be in the bouquet. If you were musical, she would sing to you all day, in the sweetest voice you ever heard in your life; if you were a painter you would be sure to find your colours and your pallets all ready for you at your own hour every day. If you delighted in books, you would always find your chamber well stored with them; and, child as was my cousin Emily, she it was who selected them from the library, well knowing whether the pages of the poet, or the philosopher, or the historian were best adapted to your individual

predilections. Indeed, wherever you moved in her father's house, you beheld traces of her "gentle spiriting." Who arranged the bouquets in the vases, and the bijouterie on the china-table, and the books in the library, but my cousin Emily? Whose handicraft was visible in the ottomans and the hearth-rugs, but my cousin Emily's? Whose voice was heard singing along the gallery, and past your chamber-door, ere you were stirring in the morning, but the voice of my cousin Emily? Always cheerful, and always active, yet apparently always at leisure, it was wonderful to think how much she did in the day, for she always appeared to be doing nothing. Every body loved her, for she was kind to every body; the servants of the house almost worshipped her; and her father—oh! never was there an only child more doated upon by an only parent. As for myself, it filled me with delight to look upon my cousin Emily. She was to me the impersonation of those "household charities," so often mentioned in the pages of my favourite poet, and I never alighted upon those two words without blessing my sweet little cousin Emily with all the fervour of my heart.

By such a father and such a daughter I need scarcely say how I was welcomed. Emily came running out to greet me with a little bundle of early violets in her hand; and after our first salu-

tations were over, and I had kissed both her dimpling cheeks, she said to me,—“ Do you still love violets, as you did when last you were here ? I hope you do for they are *my* favourites, and I have been out this morning in the fields to pick these for you, dear Gerard ! Do you remember what you used to tell me about your violet picking at school ?—ah ! you are a man now, and you have put away childish things.”

“ Nay, Emmy, not I ; we will play together as we used to play when I was last with my cousin Emily.”

“ That was three years ago, and you are not altered, though you are taller and older, and your hair is darker ; you have just the same kind voice, and the same old smile upon your face. I am so glad that you are not changed, Gerard ; and I am sure you don't wish to be a man.”

“ Oh ! no, Emmy, don't think me a man ;—and is the old swing where it was, between the two elms in the shrubbery ?”

“ Yes, it is there still. The gardener wanted to take it down, but I would not let him do so, Gerard ; for I often go to look at it, and then I say to myself, ‘ Cousin Gerard put it up for me,’ and I think of all your kindnesses, and of all the games we played together ; and I have often said, ‘ When shall I see him again ?’—and now I see you, Gerard, and once more my hand is

in my old play-fellow's;"—and saying this, she led me to the library, where Mr. Pemberton was sitting with a volume of St. Augustin before him.

My uncle shook me cordially by the hand, spoke a multitude of kind words, asked after his brother and his sister, as he called my father and my mother, though he had only married the sister of the former, thanked me over and over again for having come to pay him this visit, shut up the ponderous folio he had been reading, and then said to me, "Come along, Gerard, and see the improvements I have been making.

Some demon whispered, 'Parson have a taste,'—

and I have been improving, as I am pleased to call it, the grounds of my suburban parsonage. Look at this, and this, and this; are you a disciple of Repton's?—Speak out boldly, as Emmy does; she declares that I have spoilt the whole place;—don't you, love; my dear little critic, now don't you think that I have ruined the place?"

"I am no judge of these things, papa," said my cousin Emily, looking up into her father's face with an arch expression of countenance,—“but I don't like these changes at all; they may be for the better, but I don't like them; I don't like changes for the better.”

“You little bigot.”

“ Ah ! I don’t mind that ; but look here, Gerard, they have carried off from this place a flower-bed which I have had under my especial protection as far back as I can remember ; and they have walked off bodily with the summer-house, wherein we have drank tea and syllabub upon all my birth-day parties for years ; and they have cut down that fine old holly-tree, which has decorated the church, at Christmas, with its red berries from time immemorial, as old Blake, the sexton, tells me, and his time immemorial must be a great many years, I am sure. In short, they are a set of Goths and Vandals ; and very soon there will be nothing left to remind me of ‘ auld lang syne : ’ — my ‘ auld lang syne,’ it is true, does not comprehend quite so many ages as does that of old Blake, the sexton ; but, nevertheless, I declare upon my honour, that I’ll get the boys to burn Mr. Repton in effigy on the fifth of November ; and, Gerard, you shall have the honour of setting fire to the funeral pile.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE MIST DISPERSING.

It is a tale better perhaps untold,—
A dark page in the history of mankind,
Which would be better wholly blotted out.
It grieves me much to speak of evil things
Thou knowest, yet thou urgest me to speak.—
Well, then ; draw near and listen.

MS.

ON the morning after my arrival at the Rectory, one of the first things that I beheld, upon rising from my bed, was the identical *sac-de-nuit*, containing my manuscripts, the loss of which had so disquieted me upon the preceding day, now lying upon a chair in my bed-room, as quietly as though it had never absented itself. I know not which was greatest, my astonishment, or my delight, but the latter was the most enduring ; for, upon inspec-

tion, I discovered that there was a ticket upon the bag, addressed to me at my uncle Pemberton's, in the hand-writing of Michael Moore ; a circumstance which was quite sufficient to explain the mystery at once. It was clear that I had left the bag behind me at Merry-vale, and that Michael, who attended me to the coach, had discovered the omission after my departure, and forwarded the bag, by the next conveyance, to the address that I gave him ere I went. "God bless you, dear Michael," I exclaimed, "you have done me a good service this day."

When I entered the breakfast-room, my uncle was skimming the columns of a morning paper, and my cousin Emily was sitting behind a great hissing-and-smoking bronze tea-urn, which entirely shut her out from my sight. But when she saw me, she ran up to greet me, and as I bent down to kiss her, she whispered into my ear, "You lazy man!—too late for prayers;" and she pointed to a large bible and some prayer-books which lay upon a table, and seemed to rebuke me silently for my absence from family-worship.

Having shaken hands with my uncle, I took my seat at the breakfast-table ; and there was a bunch of violets, blue and white together, in my plate. "Oh ! you dear, good creature !" I exclaimed, looking gratefully into the beaming face of my sweet cousin Emily. And then, turning to my

uncle, I said, "It appears that you are early risers."

"Oh, yes!" returned Mr. Pemberton.—"Emmy and I are seldom much later than the sun in our up-risings. We have been half round the parish this morning, and both of us have been at our lessons more than an hour, and we have been superintending the *improvements*,—eh, Emmy?"—and Mr. Pemberton looked slyly at his daughter; and she tried to frown, pouting her rosy lips, and shaking her bright ringlets.

I laughed, and proceeded to banter Emily upon the subject of these hated improvements. She smiled, and looked very happy, as though my bantering delighted her. Presently, she said, "I think, Gerard, that you are in much better spirits this morning than you were last night."

"And so I am."

"Ah! I thought so; there was a cloud over your face last night."

"I will tell you why." And I told the story of my *sac-de-nuit*; saying nothing, however, about my manuscripts, but merely that it contained property of value. Mr. Pemberton asked some question about the Devonshire coaches; and, from the coaches, our discourse turned towards the roads; and from the roads, to the gentlemen's seats. "Does Sir Reginald Euston live in your part of the world?" asked my uncle.

“ Oh, yes !” said I ; “ within a mile of our house. I know him very well indeed ; he has been always very kind to me. He is a noble fellow. Uncle, do you know him ?”

“ I knew his father, Sir Willoughby ; but the present baronet I have never seen. If he is in London, I will call upon him.

“ He is in Paris :” and then I told Mr. Pember-ton that he had gone thither to see a dying friend, whose name was Leonard Kirby.

“ Oh ! the kind, good man !” cried my cousin Emily ; “ I am sure that I should love him if I were to know him.”

“ Leonard Kirby !” cried my uncle eagerly ; “ do you know to what family he belongs ?”

“ His father was General Kirby.”

“ Then, as I live !” exclaimed my uncle Pember-ton, “ he is son of my old colonel ;—and he is in distress, say you ?”

“ So it appears. He is a lost, ruined, degraded man ; a broken gamester ; one of the worst of profligates ; a faithless friend ; a—”

“ Nay, Gerard ; you are harsh upon him,” interrupted my good uncle. “ If he has gone astray, he is now suffering for his errors. Let us ‘ forget his vices in his woe.’”

“ We will, uncle ; it was wrong to speak so harshly of him ; but I was thus loud in my indignation, because he has wronged one of the noblest

men who ever adorned the ranks of humanity,—even Reginald Euston; he, whose kind heart, laden with love and forgiveness, has sent him forth to succour the only being that has ever injured him in the world.”

“It is noble; it is high-minded,” said my uncle; “and I doubt not, but that Leonard Kirby has grievously offended against him. But, poor Leonard! he had many and great disadvantages to contend against in his youth; and, therefore, we must judge his errors mildly. Do you know his history, Gerard?”

“I know that his father is dead; — and his mother—”

“’Tis a painful story,” interrupted my uncle Pemberton. “I knew Leonard Kirby when he was an infant; and I have often dandled him in my arms. You know that I was once in the army. Colonel Kirby commanded my regiment; and a kind, good, indulgent man he was,—quite a father to all beneath him. His heart, indeed, was too kind, and, Gerard, *it broke at last.*”

“Died he broken-hearted, then?”

“Yes, Gerard; another time I will tell you this sad history; not now—I cannot tell you now;—and you say that Reginald Euston has gone to succour his afflicted friend?”

“Yes; for that purpose, to Paris,—the great hearted man!”

"I am glad that you know how to admire," returned my uncle Pemberton, with a smile of *benignity on his face*; "*when' we cease to admire, our hearts become very hard.*"

And having said this, my uncle quitted the room, leaving me with my cousin Emily. "Now, Emmy, sing to me," I said.

Emily seated herself at the piano, and sang to me in a sweet, childish voice. I think that there are no sounds so beautiful as the tones of a very young voice. I have often felt this in a cathedral, when the chorister-boys have been chaunting an anthem: I felt this as I now sate at the piano, listening to my dear cousin Emily. And the morning passed away so pleasantly, that the sound of the dinner-bell surprised me; and dinner came—there was no one present but my uncle, my cousin Emily, and myself.

After dinner, when Emily had left us, Mr. Pemberton said to me, "Gerard, I promised that I would tell you the history of the Kirbys, and I will do so, for you spake harshly of Leonard; and I would not that you should judge him too severely. Listen to me, and you will hear much—if not to palliate his offences, at all events—to soften them in your opinion; for we must always take into consideration the predisposing causes of a disease."

, 'General Kirby—he was Colonel Kirby when

I knew him—married a Miss Bouyerie. She was a lady of considerable personal attractions, and of very superior accomplishments. I well remember her when I was in the army, for to tell the truth, boy as I was, she paid me very marked attention; and I believe that her only reason for doing so was that I bore the reputation of a scholar, and Mrs. Kirby was herself distinguished by classical attainments of no ordinary degree. She was, at that time, in my boyish estimation, a woman of very remarkable genius, and altogether a most engaging person, though even my immature judgment discerned that there was much more to fascinate the senses than to command respect in Mrs. Colonel Kirby. Her husband, than whom she was many years younger, doated upon her with his whole soul, but she appeared not to return the warmth of his affection; nor indeed did she regard the two children, which she had borne him, with any great degree of maternal solicitude. She was, in truth, a strange, flighty, capricious woman—and her imagination, which was much too froward, often led her into unbecoming excesses. She knew not what it was to regulate her feelings, or indeed to exercise self-denial of any kind, either upon ordinary or extraordinary occasions. In short, she had very strong passions, which she did not know how to moderate, and acting always upon the impulse of the moment, she was often precipitated

into the commission of offences, which, upon reflection, filled her soul with repentance, and caused her to be the most wretched of women."

"I have said, that she never loved the colonel. Why, I know not, for he was the worthiest of men, and the most tender—the most indulgent of husbands. Perhaps it was that he did not sympathize with her tastes, and sometimes smiled at her enthusiasm. Be that as it may; she broke his heart; she fell, Gerard—she fell!"

"She fled from him—the regiment was then at Gibraltar, and her paramour was a young artilleryman—yes, strange as it may appear, Gerard, this woman, with her highly cultivated mind, fell to a common gunner of artillery. That he should have spread his net to ensnare one so far above him is not likely—indeed 'tis impossible: the man who would play the villain seeks a lowly, because a powerless victim. Lust rarely or never aspires; it is the most cowardly of all our vices, for it generally attacks the weakest. You may always know, when two of unequal station have deviated from the paths of virtue together, that the higher criminal has been the betrayer, the more lowly one the victim of the two. But enough of this; I cannot bear to dwell upon any such hateful topics. Mrs. Kirby became faithless to her husband for the sake of a young gunner of artillery."

"And his name?" said I.

“ At this moment I remember it not ; nor does it matter ; but I shall be able to inform you by referring to an old diary. It was after my abandonment of the military profession that this melancholy circumstance occurred. I have heard that he was a fine young Irishman—”

“ An Irishman ! ” I exclaimed, for a strange suspicion flashed across my brain at this moment—
“ An Irishman ! and he is since dead ; he was killed, was he ?—and can you not contrive to remember his name, uncle ? ”

My uncle was astonished at the eagerness with which I advanced these questions ; my whole appearance manifested an intense emotion of curiosity. I was leaning forward with pale face, and parted lips, and clenched hands ; for I was in an agony of suspense, and I expected every moment to hear that which would confirm the strong suspicion that possessed me.

But my uncle did not remember the name of the artillery-man ; he smiled, and promised that he would satisfy my curiosity by referring ere long to his memoranda ; “ I believe,” said Mr. Pemberton, “ that he was a young man of good family and liberal education ; but that having quarrelled with his friends, and being without money, he enlisted as a gunner in the artillery. Colonel Kirby, by some accident or other, became acquainted with him, and patronized the young man. Through the

Colonel's interest he was promoted to the rank of sergeant. Shortly after which the detachment he belonged to was ordered home, and then Mrs. Kirby, having procured a passage in the same vessel, under a fictitious name, embarked likewise for England, having pre-arranged matters with her paramour, and thus the evil deed was accomplished. The colonel, upon being made acquainted with the calamity that had befallen him, did nothing, said nothing, but he felt too much. He uttered no curse; he attempted no retribution, but endeavouring to veil his emotions, he invented some story to account for the absence of his wife to his brother officers and his friends, anxious, if possible, to save her reputation from the sneers and condemnations of the world. Then he tried to appear cheerful, though the worm was gnawing at his heart; and he wore a smiling face, and he spoke kindly of his wife; and he appeared in every respect to be the same Colonel Kirby that he was before his wife deserted him; but his heart was breaking all this time; and about eighteen months afterwards, in England, whither he had returned upon being made a general officer, this poor man breathed his last, leaving behind him two orphan children—a boy and a little girl."

"These children," continued Mr. Pemberton, "were entrusted to the care of an aunt—a maiden lady of some fortune, who was unhappily of a

weak, vacillating nature, and totally unfit to superintend the education of young children. She was very fond of them, and she manifested her love by indulging them to a vicious extent. She never attempted to control them, nor reprimanded them when they offended; and the consequences of this over-indulgence was, that the boy, who inherited in a remarkable degree the impetuous character of his mother, grew up without any fixed principles of any kind, recognizing no other laws but his own appetites, and wilfully turning a deaf ear to the voice of duty, and indeed of expediency, for he cared as little about that which was prudent as he did about that which was right. But the girl, who inherited the mild nature of her father, escaped the ruin that descended upon Leonard. Last season, she was introduced to me at a friend's house in the metropolis, and a more gentle, a more seemingly amiable, and certainly a more beautiful girl it has seldom been my good fortune to converse with. She spoke of her brother—said that he was on the Continent, and that she had not seen him for many years. She sighed whenever she mentioned his name, and I could see that there was some secret weighing upon her poor heart. What that sorrow was, your story has explained. Let us pray for the soul of poor Leonard!”

“ But the mother—is she still living, or has she followed her husband to the grave ? ”

"I do not know, Gerard—I think that I remember being told by an old brother officer, that she accompanied her paramour to the Peninsula, and that he was killed at the taking of Ciudad Rodrigo."

"Or, St. Sebastian, uncle; do not you think that he was slain at the taking of St. Sebastian?"

"Very probably—nay, now I consider it, I believe that you are right," returned my uncle.

"And his name was—*Moore*," said I, gasping for breath, and my limbs trembling with excitement.

"*It was*; now you mention the name, I remember it well," replied my uncle. "But, Gerard, what know you of these people, and why are you so desperately eager to be made acquainted with their whole history?"

"Oh! uncle, because I know them—because Mrs. Kirby, or Mrs. Moore, or whatever her rightful name may be, is now living within a mile of our house—because I have often marvelled that one so accomplished and so lady-like should be dwelling in an humble cottage;—because, uncle, I love her children dearly, for they are the most graceful, and the most intelligent, and the most amiable creatures I have ever beheld in my life,—because, I feel an interest in the family of the Moores, which no words can describe,—often

having suspected them to be other than they seem,—often having endeavoured to pierce the obscurity which envelopes the early history of their lives,—often having discerned in the mother traces of a superior education;—~~and~~ in the children, of a loftier instinct than they could have inherited from a line of cottagers;—in short, uncle, it has been my leading desire, for years, to unravel this perplexity, and now by a strange accident, it is accomplished; suddenly all is made clear, and I have been saved, by this elucidation, from a world of doubt and suspense.”

I was silent; my uncle smiled at my enthusiasm, and said to me, when I had done speaking, “But, do you not think, Gerard, that you have leaped too suddenly into this conclusion?”

“I think not,” said I, and then I told my uncle that Mrs. Moore herself had acquainted me with the circumstances of her husband’s death,—how he was killed in the trenches, at the taking of St. Sebastian by the British army, in thirteen. And then I told him of my accidental discovery of her classical attainments, when she was reading Jeremy Taylor aloud, one day, to her children, and that I was quite sure, from other circumstances, that she was a woman of birth and education, fitting her better for a palace than for a cottage.

“And she was in the habit,” said my uncle

Pemberton, interrogatively, "of reading Jeremy Taylor to her children?"

"In the daily habit," I replied.

"Strange," said my uncle, with a sigh; "for the *Holy Living* was your Kirby's favorite book, and he rarely passed a day without reading it."

"Then can you doubt, uncle, any longer, that my Mrs. Moore was once *your* Mrs. Kirby?"

"I confess, Gerard," replied my uncle, "that you have made out a clear case. And you say, that she is a good woman, a good mother, a good christian, Gerard."

"The best of women—the best of n.others—the best of christians," I replied. "If she has sinned, she has repented, and is leading a new life. Oh! uncle, if you were to see her now, so meek, so humble, so resigned—bringing up her children in the way that they should go—a very pattern of piety and devotion; you would not think that you beheld in the subdued and penitent Mrs. Moore, the impetuous and frail Mrs. Kirby. Oh! indeed she has been born again, and is leading a new life unto salvation."

"And in this course you say that she has continued for years: then, Gerard, we may hope that her penitence is complete, and that the 'old man is crucified,' within her. For salvation is not accomplished by the mere shedding of penitent tears, but by an entire turning away from wicked-

ness, and a perfect regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. I think that it is L'Estrange who writes that 'it is not for a desultory thought to atone for a lewd course of life; nor for any thing but the superinducement of a virtuous habit upon a vicious one, to qualify an effectual conversion. Tears of repentance, carried up to heaven, as an angel's gift, may be pretty, and, perhaps, harmless in poetry, though false and dangerous in divinity; for, alas! multitudes weep over their errors, but multitudes do not amend them.' "

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HISSINGS OF THE WATER-SPRINKLED LOVE-
EMBERS.

“ True love never yet
Was thus constrained ; it over-leaps all fence
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents ; like heaven’s free breath,
Which he, who grasps can hold not ; liker death,
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
Of arms ; more strength has love than he or they.”

SHELLEY.

WHEN I retired that night to my chamber, and laid my head upon my pillow, I could not sleep, for my brain was overladen with the teeming thoughts that crowded upon it so thickly, that I courted oblivion in vain. The most effectual way of inducing sleep is by throwing one’s thoughts into a state of confusion ; that is, by first thinking of one thing, and then of another totally different from the first, and so on, that we may prevent a

train of thought, than which there is nothing in the world, not even pain, so inimical to sleep. I write from my own experience ; perhaps others may be inclined to differ from me.

But, whatever may be the best inducements to sleep, upon the night of which I am now writing, heaviness descended not upon my eyelids, and my ideas followed one another in succession so very orderly, so deductive, perhaps I ought to say, one conclusion leading to another, that, do what I would, I could not sleep, and at last, I gave it up in despair.

The conversation that had passed between my uncle and myself, or rather my uncle's history of the Kirbys, was, of course, the subject matter of my contemplations. I was disappointed, bitterly disappointed, for the discovery which I had just made was of a most unsatisfactory nature. It was plain that Michael and Ella were descended from well-born parentage ; gentle blood flowed in their veins ; I had suspected this all along, and now I was convinced of the fact. But what painful thoughts did that conviction bring with it ! Michael and Ella were the children of shame, the offspring of an adulterous connexion ; they were illegitimate, or, if not that, they owed their existence to an union, which, at all events, had begun in crime, even though it *might* have terminated in honesty. But this I knew not ; and the uncertainty, arising

from my speculations upon this subject, was most painful to me ; I was fully determined to sift this mystery to the bottom. Was Mrs. Moore married a second time ? and were Michael and Ella born in wedlock ?—This I asked myself again and again ; but, though I pondered much, I could not answer the question. I had no data to proceed upon ; at least, I had not sufficient to enable me to solve this problem. I did not know the precise period at which Mrs. Kirby, by the death of the General, had been made free to espouse another husband. It was true that I might easily determine this point by asking my uncle ; but, in the mean time, I had nothing to do, but to arrive at the most logical conclusion, that my very unlogical mind would admit of in this embarrassment. So I began, like my friend Smith, to “ put two and two together.”

My uncle Pemberton was five-and-forty years of age ; this I knew ; and I was likewise well informed that he had bidden adieu to the army about the time that he had bidden adieu to his minority ; and, it was clear therefore, that these two concordant events must have taken place four-and-twenty years ago. Now, Lawrence Moore was eighteen ; and so it followed, that six years must have intervened between the time of my uncle's leaving the army, and the date of Larry's nativity. If General Kirby died in this interval,

then all Mrs. Moore's three children might be, and probably were, legitimate. That his demise took place subsequently to my uncle's abandonment of the army, I knew; but whether it was one or six years afterwards, I was ignorant; and it was this perplexity that distracted me in so painful a manner. Six years was a long interval of time, and for Ella, I might have allowed eight; but, even then, supposing I was to have assured myself that the General had breathed his last previously to the birth of the young Moores, how was I possibly to ascertain whether their father and mother had ever been joined together in matrimony according to the rites of the Church? The solution of one doubt seemed only to be the parent of another. But, allowing that I was to establish this point in a most satisfactory manner, what had I discovered? Absolutely nothing that could in any way raise Michael and Ella to a more exalted station upon the ladder of the world than that which they were now occupying. Indeed, I had made a discovery, which I would not, upon any account, have imparted to them; and this was to me a source of the most bitter mortification. Instead of discovering that my friends were the offspring of illustrious parents, I had discovered positively that they were children of very dishonest ones; and that not only was their father in reality a non-commissioned officer of artillery, but

that he was, moreover, a worthless reprobate, who had betrayed the confidence placed in him, and broken the heart of his benefactor. Better, much better would it have been, had I remained in my pristine ignorance.

But again it occurred to me, "Are they really *her* children? Lawrence may be, but not Michael and Ella." I know not why I should have made this distinction, except that my "wish was father to the thought," and that I had less affection for Lawrence than I had for Michael and Ella. It was clear, however, that they—the two latter—were children of the same parents. They so resembled one another in feature and complexion, and in almost every personal attribute, even to the very tones of their voices, and the smallness of their hands and feet.* They bore no likeness to their reputed mother; but then how many children are there who resemble neither of their parents; and I did not know but that Michael and Ella might have inherited their light hair and their delicate complexions from their father. But there

* Fearful lest I should be accused of plagiarism, I will quote two passages from the poemata of Lord Byron.

" — all to the very tone "

Even of her voice, they said were like to mine."

Manfred.

' Even to the delicacy of their hands

There was resemblance."

Don Juan.

was certainly one circumstance which warranted a reasonable conjecture that they were not the children of Mrs. Moore; they had alluded to their reminiscences of a former state of grandeur,—they remembered marble statues and stone columns, and servants and velvet cushions; and it was plain that they could not have beheld these things as the children of an ordnance conductor, unless, indeed, they had seen them in one of the officers' houses; and even then it was not likely that the children would have remembered them, if they had not been in the constant habit of seeing such things in their infancy. Altogether I was very much perplexed, but the more distracted I became, the greater mixture of hope was there in my perplexity.

Then the circumstance of the fifty-pound note, that I had discovered in the *Erasmus*, occurred to me. There were the coat-of-arms and the initials E.A., what had they to do with the Kirby's, and who was represented by these two vowels? and how came Mrs. Moore with the book? This last question was easily answered. Mrs. Moore, or Col. Kirby, or any body else, might have bought the volume at a sale. In every collection of books you may see a variety of armorial bearings; and as for the fifty-pound note, there was no possible way of accounting for its interposition between the pages of the volume, but by the care-

lessness of a former owner who had placed the bill there as a mark, and had subsequently forgotten to remove it.

And having summed up all the evidence before me in the most judge-like manner imaginable, I, at length, arrived at the conclusion that, although there could be very little doubt of the real parentage of Michael and Ella, it was just possible that they might not be the children, either legitimate or illegitimate, of Mrs. Moore; and, although this possibility was a mere straw for me to catch at, yet it was something, and a very little hope is much better than blank despair. Solacing myself with this little hope, I, at length, fell asleep.

On the following morning, having previously discovered from my uncle, that Lawrence Moore could by no possibility be otherwise than a child of shame, since General Kirby was living at the time of the boy's nativity, I travelled up to London by a public conveyance, taking with me my precious manuscripts, that I might leave them for approval or rejection, at the house of a celebrated publisher. This I did, without presenting myself, in person, before such an awful tribunal; for I thought that it would be as easy to explain my wishes by letter as by word of mouth; besides, I was of a nervous temperament, which shrunk, at all times, from personal communication with

strangers, upon matters of business; and upon the present occasion, I was not without apprehension, that my vanity might meet with a rebuff.

Having left my manuscripts, with a note, at the publisher's, I proceeded towards the lodgings of my friend Smith, for he was living alone in Gower Street, during the short Easter vacation. His family resided in one of our great northern towns, Liverpool, or Birmingham, or Manchester, or Halifax; and as he intended to pass the long vacation with his friends, he did not think it worth his while to travel so great a distance for the two or three weeks at Easter. "Besides," said Smith, "I have such a large acquaintance in our town, that with the best possible resolutions, I should find myself compelled to be idle, and I cannot afford to sacrifice *all* my vacations to my friends. I have been laughed at for selecting London as a place to read in, but there is no spot in the world that holds out fewer temptations to seduce me from my books than the metropolis. When I see the bright sun, from my study windows, shining upon the green landscape, I feel an instinctive desire to throw aside my books, and to luxuriate in the open air; but here, in this smoky city, with nothing but dingy brick-houses around me on every side, I think that I am better at home than abroad, and I have no desire to extend my ex-

cursions further than the world of books." Thus reasoned John Smith, and there was wisdom too in what he advanced.

I found the man of sense in his lodgings, making notes upon one of Pindar's Olympiads. His table was groaning under the weight of Stephens' *Thesaurus*, Facciolati's Latin Lexicon, and sundry other books of reference, less bulky in their dimensions. He wore a grey frieze dressing gown, and a pair of carpet slippers, in regular reading costume, and altogether he looked comfortable, and independent; not a pale-faced, lean student, but a stout, healthy-looking scholar; who neither ate nor slept the less for his industry, nor suffered the lamp of learning to consume one drop of the oil of health. He used to say that, "in the pursuit of knowledge, if the mind travel so fast that it exhausts the energies of the body, the weakness of the body will retard the advances of the mind, as a worn-out fellow traveller clings to his companion for support, and then both of them labour on with difficulty." But I was not, by any means, disposed to coincide in this opinion; for when my body has been weakest, my mind has been always most strong; and I think that there is nothing which more deadens the intellect than a rude state of animal health. I should like much to enlarge upon this subject, but I do not think that it is

the province of the novellist to indulge in such subtle disquisitions.

The first thing that Smith said to me was, "Well, Doveton, have you heard from Anstruther, Esq., of Charlton Abbey, in the county of H——?"

I shook my head, and replied, "But there has not been time yet."

"Plenty," said Smith; "if he had written by post, on the day after his arrival, you might have received your money by this time."

"But, my dear fellow!" I returned, "consider the circumstances of the case:—a dying mother, and all the miseries attending upon a death-bed scene. You may well give him a week, after the funeral, to recover his self-possession."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed John Smith.

There was a pause: I had nothing to say in reply to that decisive monosyllable. But Smith, changing the subject, presently asked, whether I had recovered my carpet-bag?

"Yes!" I cried, with an air of triumph; for had the advantage of Smith there.

"And in the way, I suppose, that I recommended to you?" said the man of sense, with a smile.

"By no means," replied the man of imagination, drawing himself up with the air of a conqueror.

"How, then?"

"I left it behind me, at Merry-vale, and Michael Moore was kind enough to forward it."

"And, pray, who is Michael Moore?"

This question induced an explanation; for I really liked Smith. I was of an open, confiding nature; and I loved to unburthen my heart to any one who had inspired me with affection. So I told him the whole history of the Moores; my friendship for Michael, and the love I bare towards Ella; and my suspicions that they were other than they seemed.

Smith's face wore a serious aspect, as he said, "Have you ever reflected upon the nature of your alliance with these people?"

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this," said the man of sense; and slowly and calmly his words came forth, as he continued: "It appears, from your story, that you are enamoured of this Ella Moore, and that the girl returns your affection.—Is this the case?"

The blood mounted to my very forehead, as I replied, "Yes, it is."

"And have you ever reflected upon the probable issue of this mutual attachment? You say that the girl is beautiful;—she is a cottage-girl, far beneath you;—young, simple, and confiding. Now, listen to me, Gerard Doveton: I have long known you, and I fully believe in the kindness of

your heart and the integrity of your principles.—I do not think that you are a villain.”

“*A villain!*” I exclaimed, starting from my seat, and clenching my hand as I spoke.

“Nay, Doveton, hear me out,” said Smith, with the utmost calmness. “I say that I do not think you a villain. I believe you to be honest, generous, and kind-hearted. I do not think that you would ruin this girl.”

“Let me beseech you, Smith, to spare me these negative compliments. I do not see why you should tell me that you do *not* think me a villain.”

“Because, though *I* do not think so, *others*, perhaps, may. You are more than eighteen,—the girl two years younger. As children, you might have consorted harmlessly together; but now, Doveton, your own good sense must point out the necessity of breaking off this alliance. It is a pity that you should have proceeded to this extremity; for it will cost you much anguish to break asunder the link that so long has bound you together.”

“It will break my heart!”

“And yet it must be done. Better to die, than to be suspected. You are not bound to live; but you are bound to live honestly.”

“And why not live honestly *with Ella?*”

“Oh, yes!” replied Smith; “you certainly may marry the girl.”

"To be sure. Then why talk so much about villany, and heart-breaking separations?"

"Hear me, Doveton," replied the man of sense; "it may be, that you will smile with contempt, when I talk about conventional distinctions and say that it would little become you to marry this cottage girl. If I cause you pain, I am sincerely sorry for it; but believe me, Gerard, that my opinion is the opinion of the whole world. You may despise that opinion, and think that you are superior to any such paltry considerations; but perhaps you will acknowledge, with me, that it would be both unwise and selfish to sacrifice your own happiness and that of your best beloved."

"Doubtless; and that sacrifice would be made, if Ella and I were to be sundered."

"Perhaps not; you think so at present; but when you have thought about it a little, you will find that it is not so impossible to reconcile yourself to this change. Time has a wonderful effect upon sorrow; and it is astonishing with what fortitude we bear, after a season, the evils which, at first sight, appear to be absolutely insupportable. You will soon forget Ella Moore. Have you got a pretty cousin, Doveton?"

"The prettiest that ever was seen."

"Then fall in love with her as quickly as you can."

"Smith, I entreat you not to talk in this heartless manner. I love the girl—I love Ella Moore; and why should I not marry her?"

"Oh! marry her," said Smith, "marry her by all means, and be discarded by your whole family. Marry her, and entail upon your wife the odium of all your relatives; exalt her to a station in society, where her claims will be unacknowledged; expose her to endless contumely, and a series of cruel mortifications; allow her the satisfaction of feeling that she has ruined her doating husband; yes, Doveton, let her see that she has brought upon you the curses of your parents and the scoffs of society, and then ask her if she be happy.—Oh! my friend, man never did grosser injury to woman, than by raising her to a station in society, which she was never intended to fill."

"Smith, if you were once to see Ella, you would never talk to me again in this manner. I'll answer for it that you have formed in your mind a very incorrect notion of the girl. If you think that she is one of your thick-limbed country wenches, with coarse, rosy cheeks, and clumsy ankles, and red hands, and calf-like movements, and a harsh voice, and a corrupt dialect, you are grievously in error, I assure you. In the first place, she is exceedingly beautiful ——"

"Of course."

"And she is full of grace; every action, every

motion of her limbs, whether she sits, or walks, or stands, is replete with the most exquisite grace. I tell you, Smith, that in any assemblage, among the gentlest, the most high-born ladies of the land, would Ella Moore be "the observed of all observers." With her slender, undulating figure, and her blue eyes, and her small features, and her tiny white hands, and her pretty little feet, she is as delicate and as aristocratic a maiden, as though she had been bred in a palace. And her mind, Smith—oh! think not, I beseech you, that it is coarse, and ignorant, and indiscriminating; for she is endowed with an exquisite sense of the beautiful and becoming; thoughtful is she, much has she read, and when she speaks to you, you would think an angel were speaking, such melody is there in the tones of her voice."

"One thing seems very clear, however," said Smith, with a smile upon his face.

"And what is that?"

"Why, 'tis clear from your glowing description of the girl, that you are devotedly in love with her, Gerard. I would that it were otherwise, my friend; for I do not think that much happiness is likely to accrue from your attachment. The girl may be all that you describe her; nay, I think that she is, Doveton; for you are not one to see perfections that do not actually exist. But however beautiful and accomplished she may be in

herself, you must feel that in station she is far beneath you ; and I have already described some of the miseries that result from an ill-assorted match. Be not impelled by passion, but guided by reason. Oh ! my friend, if ever you have listened to my advice, give ear to it now, I beseech you. Consider well what you are about ; pause ere you have gone too far ; restrain the impetuosity of your nature ; and do not suffer the calm voice of reason to be overswayed by the hurricane of your passions."

Smith spoke with an earnestness and a rapidity of utterance quite at variance with the even tenor of his common discourses. I had never seen him so much moved before ; it was plain that my interest was very dear to him, and that he regarded me with sincere affection. No ordinary cause of inquietude could thus have ruffled the calmness of his nature. I looked into his face ; and his massive features wore an expression of earnest sorrow. I was almost tempted to cry aloud, " You have prevailed, Smith, you have prevailed."

But my great love for Ella Moore restrained me. What was Smith to me in comparison with her ? What were all his humilities, and his eternal common-sense, when weighed against one kind word, or one smile of affection from Ella ?—" Smith," said I, " you are my friend, I know it ; I see that you are my sincere friend. But I cannot abandon the Moores ;

I cannot tear^d out the love of Ella from my heart, without bursting all its strings asunder: as long as its pulses continue to beat, they must, they shall beat for her. Smith, you do not know what it is to love, or you would not talk in this strain to me. I tell you, that for her sake I am ready to sacrifice every thing; friends, parents, station, every blessing in the world, but her love. 'Station, indeed! what is station to me? I will descend to her station; on me shall the tempest fall. What if I should give up everything, and live with Ella Moore in a cottage? there is nothing of selfishness in that.'

"You talk like a puling, love-sick boy, as you are," returned John Smith.—"How many have uttered before you just this same farrago of nonsense, about cottages and broken hearts, and all the other pet symbols of the tender passion, yet how few have put their love and their philosophy to the proof, by giving up, for the sake of the beloved, one tittle of the common comforts of life. You think that you mean what you say, but you do not; no, no, Gérard, no cottages for you.

'Love in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is—love forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust.'

Take my word for it, that the writer of these lines is perfectly correct in his assertion. Love in a

hut ! Doveton ; nonsense ! Hunger and cold, and nakedness, and squalling children, and tickets for soup from the Mendicity Society, and no end of distraining for rent."

" I did not think, Smith," I replied, beginning to lose my temper, " that you were capable of talking such absurdity. I took you for a man of sense ; I find you a man of nonsense. *Hunger and cold*, what silly bug-bears ! just like the *bogies*, which the nursery-maid conjures up to frighten young children. Hunger, indeed ! have I not a hand to execute, and a head to contrive ? have I not faculties, mind, intellect ?"—

" And nine hundred pages of manuscript in your carpet bag ?"—cried John Smith.

" This is too much ; it is, indeed," I exclaimed. —" Smith, you will drive me mad."

" Nay, Doveton, you are that already," returned Smith, with the utmost calmness.

" Do you wish, Sir, to drive me from your house ?" and I started from my seat, as I spoke. " Do you wish, Sir, to, to, to——in short, do you wish to insult me ?"

" Why, as you put the question so frankly," replied Smith, " frankly shall you be answered, Doveton. I *do* think that you are wasting my time by staying here. I *do* think that you had better be gone."

" Oh ! certainly, certainly, Mr. Smith ;" en-

deavpuring to assume an air of levity, as I seized my hat and retired, "your most obedient; good morning, Sir;" and I grasped the handle of the door, but my arm trembled so much with excitement, that it was some time before I could open it.

"Yet stay, Doveton,—do not go yet," cried Smith; "I don't wish you to leave me in a passion."

I did not answer, and Smith continued, "I acknowledge, Doveton, that I was wrong."

Now, this was the first time that Smith had ever confessed himself wrong, in any of his transactions with me, for indeed, it was the first time that he had been wrong. But the acknowledgment had its due effect. I returned to my seat, and laid my hat upon the table, and said, "Well, Smith, I forgive you."

"And you really love this girl, with your whole soul?" asked Smith.

"I have told you so before," said I.

"And she loves you with an equal measure of affection?"

"I think so."

"'Tis not enough to think."

"I am sure that she does; all her words, and looks, and actions, betray her love."

"And you know what love is—you know how to interpret those signs?"

“ Oh, Smith ! can you ask me such a question ? — Do you not remember the first conversation that ever passed between us two ? Oh ! ever since I began to think, has one strong and absorbing desire possessed my whole soul ; a desire, or rather I should say a burning thirst, to be loved. And can you ask me whether I know what love is, and what are its common manifestations — me, who have watched for hours the changing aspect of a countenance, looking for an expression of love — me, who, with the most subtle sense of hearing, have analysed every voice that has addressed me, hoping to catch a tone of affection — me, who have watched, and prayed, and panted for love, as the hart pants for the water-brooks. Oh, Smith ! can you ask me, whether I know what are its signs ! ”

The man of sense did not smile at my enthusiasm. His face was sad, and I thought that I perceived an unwonted glistening in his eyes. He shook me by the hand, and said very kindly, “ Well, Doveton, I have nothing more to say. I was wrong, from the very first, to intrude my advice upon such delicate matters as these. What have I do with such things ? What do I know about the inmost feelings of your heart ? You must let those feelings decide for you. I perhaps, least of all men in the world, am competent to give advice upon love matters. Commune with your

own heart, and I do not think that you will act impurely; though, perhaps, you will act unwisely. But as the old Roman said, and as I once quoted to you before, 'Oh! how hard it is both to love and to be wise.' "Doveton, I will say no more to you. Love is the province of the heart, not of the head; and, therefore, you must be guided by your own feelings, and not by my advice. This is unsaying all that I have said to you before; but I will stand the charge of inconsistency. Common sense, and love, have nothing to do with one another."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ERRATIC COURSES OF THE IMAGINATION.

“ I had a noble purpose, and the strength
To compass it : but I have stopped half-way,
And have bestowed the first fruits of my toil
On objects little worthy to receive them.”

BROWNING.

“ 'Tis by comparison an easy task
Earth to despise ; but to converse with Heaven,
This is not easy.”

WORDSWORTH.

TIME passed—and very delightfully, at the house of my good uncle. I must, indeed, have been a discontented, hungry mortal, if I had not been happy there. Summer was coming on; and in the spring-time of the year, I always breathe an atmosphere of hope. And then there was my uncle, a being to admire, and my cousin Emily, a creature to love; and a life of “admiration,

“hope, and love,” is indeed a very pleasant existence.

But there were two opposing circumstances that disquieted me—“two little cloudlets floating about the pure heaven of my serenity—and they were these: that week after week passed away, and brought me no tidings of Mr. Anstruther, and that during this time, no communication of any sort was received by me from Sir Reginald Euston.

Perhaps, I might add to these a third source of discomfort. My manuscripts were returned by the bookseller to whom I entrusted them, with a very polite note, stating that “the multitude of his engagements prevented him from having the honour, &c., of introducing my work to the public.” Upon this, I forwarded them to another publisher, and the same answer was returned;—to another; and my third application brought a third reply, resembling its forerunners.

“More writers than readers,” thought I, as I locked up the notes in my writing-desk.

But I was young, and I was full of faith. A few stormy days will strip the trees of their foliage in Autumn; but in the Summer, though the winds may blow with all their virulence, not a leaf falleth to the ground. Youth can bear up against misfortunes, beneath the pressure of which age would

be crushed ; and, indeed, I was little dispirited by the failure of my three grand hopes.

One night, after I had retired to my chamber, it occurred to me that I would repêruse the manuscripts which had been treated so scornfully by the booksellers. I did so ; and I was immediately struck by the multitude and the heinousness of the faults which disfigured my poor work. Suddenly this consciousness came upon me with a strange sickening sensation. I read on ; and every page presented a new catalogue of monstrous deformities. Some passages were wretchedly flat,—others horribly exaggerated,—exaggeration was indeed the main feature of the work, for it was fatally overwritten ; and almost every character was strained into a *lusus nature*. I had neither men nor women in my drama ; all the actors were either angels or demons. Where I had attempted to be profound, I was generally obscure,—where humorous, always absurd,—where forcible, invariably grotesque. The story itself was in one part disjointed,—in another inextricably involved. Perhaps there never was a book written with so many faults in it of a totally opposite nature. Extremes of every kind met together in its pages ; and as a whole it was a miserable distortion. Yet, nevertheless, paradoxical as it may appear, there were abundant signs of genius in every chapter of the work. It

was a sort of intellectual phenomenon. There were incidents enough in the volumes to form the machinery of half-a-dozen novels, and they followed one another with inconceivable rapidity, yet nevertheless the interest of the story flagged awfully, and the action of the plot was languid in the extreme. It was intended to be a philosophical narrative, and yet it was remarkably flippant, at the same time that it was excessively dull. But in spite of this it was a work of genius,—a splendid piece of extravagant folly. Its faults were chiefly those of a too exuberant imagination. I had thrown all my wealth into its pages without selection or arrangement; and a number of beautiful parts may make a very inharmonious whole, as Albert Durer found, when he did “take the best parts of divers faces, to make one excellent;” or as Frankenstein discovered when he put together a number of beautiful limbs and features; and made a complete—*monster*. The fact is, with regard to myself and my book, that I had had far too much to say; the thoughts and feelings of a whole life, which had long been garnered up in my brain, were now emptied into these volumes. I had confessed myself, as Göthe said, in this book; I had rid myself of much perilous stuff, and had done my mind much service by this first attempt at authorship; though the attempt had been a lamentable failure.

Smith, to whom I had imparted the history of my transactions with the booksellers, and of my subsequent mortifying discovery, thus wrote to me. —“How could you have expected otherwise, my dear Doveton? Did I not tell you that there could be nothing more worthless than the manuscripts of a boy of eighteen? But let not this failure dishearten you; and above all things, *do not burn these manuscripts*, for although the booksellers have refused them, and you yourself are ashamed of their deformities, they may nevertheless contain much valuable material which will be of use to you in another form, though in its present state utterly worthless. There can be no greater mistake than the destruction of MSS. by an author in a fit of indignation. He is sure to repent of the act. However bad your work may be as a whole, there are probably detached passages in it which you will never surpass in the maturity of your intellect. Do not destroy, but select; and remember, Doveton, that exaggeration in a young author is the most venial of all offences, even as a propensity to run away is a fault, which in a young horse we most readily overlook. There is no hope for an authorling if he begins tamely; for age softens down, but does not strengthen; and whilst it sharpens the judgment, it dulls the brightness of the imagination. Perhaps your creative powers will

'never be more vigorous than they are now; but years will bring you critical discernment. You know how to make; you must now learn how to destroy. Study the *art of blotting*, for without this *few* arrive at eminence; I was about to say *none*, but it was Shakspeare's boast that he had 'never blotted a line.' Ben Jonson's comment thereupon you know as well I do, my dear Doveton. I will not say to you, in the words of Martial,—

Comitetur punica librum

Spongia

Non possunt multæ, una litura potest.'

But I will advise you to take the pen into your hand, and *dele—dele—dele*: blot whatever you think objectionable, and never doubt,—doubt is condemnation; for if you be not sure that a passage is good, you may make yourself certain that it is bad.—And, Doveton, a few words more. You may take occasion, in one of the chapters of your book, to recommend young gentlemen to be careful how they open their purses to interesting strangers with pale faces, black cloaks, and dying mothers at Bath. I hope that you will charge Mr. Anstruther the interest of your money, *when you get it*. In the *mean time* be

Take the sponge, boy; undo what you have done,
Not *many* blots will mend your book, but *one*.

guided by the counsels of your friend, JOHN SMITH."

And guided by his counsels I was.—I became a critic, where before I was^d a poet. I began to pull down, where before I had built up, and I commenced the work of destruction most relentlessly. It often happens, or, to use the language of Festus in the poem,*

" It must oft fall out
That he whose labour perfects any work
Shall rise from it with eye so worn, that he
Least of all men can measure the extent
Of that he has accomplished ;"

and it is certain that, when I first left my book at the publisher's, I had a very imperfect knowledge of its actual merits, for there was a very strong impression on my mind of the excellence of what I had written; but, having for some time rested from the labour of composition, and not having, in this interim, even glanced at my productions, I now reperused them with a new mind, or as though they had been the work of another. My eyes were no longer dazzled by the false glitter of my meretricious achievements; I saw, with a mortifying distinctness, the glaring faults that I

had committed; the enchantment was gone; all that had appeared so bright and so solid was nothing but "Tantalus' gold, no substance but mere illusions;"—and I, myself, no longer one of the magnates of the land, but a beggar—not a Dives, but a Lazarus—not a conqueror, but a miserable dupe.

But I did not despair. Nothing makes me so strong as the consciousness of once having failed; and so it was that I set about rebuilding the tower that I had demolished, with energies far surpassing those which had erected the original edifice. My work progressed; and I said to myself, "If we desire to succeed, there is nothing like a failure at the outset."

All this time my moral character was undergoing a great and important change for the better. The constant companionship of my uncle and my cousin Emily had a most beneficial influence upon my young and plastic mind. My uncle corrected all my erroneous impressions; whilst my cousin Emily in her own beautiful self, exemplified her father's precepts. I regarded the one as the impersonation of religion; the other, of domestic charity; and it was very plain that I had been led, by my imagination, into grievous offences against these two best qualities, which together make the perfection of the Christian character; and this knowledge sorely distressed me. I had

very few fixed dogmas of faith; altogether my notions of religion were of the most vague and confused nature imaginable; and, to confess the truth, I wandered on in ignorance; and if I did the work of God, I knew it not.*

One morning when we had risen from family worship, my uncle said to me, "My dear Gerard, do you pray in secret to the Giver of good things?" My answer was a deep blush—and then one word was faltered out—"Sometimes."

"*Sometimes!*" replied my uncle—"You mean, Gerard, that when your mind is distressed—when affliction comes upon you and your hopes are darkened, you then pray to him for assistance; the selfishness of your nature—forgive the harshness of the phrase—compels you to acknowledge your God."

"Nay, uncle, I never denied Him."

"Not in words, perhaps; but do you not deny, by practically refusing to commune with Him, except in the hour of tribulation? 'Affliction teaches a wicked person sometimes to pray; Prosperity never;† which sheweth that gratitude—' then he checked himself suddenly, for his truthfulness was gaining the ascendancy over his charity,

"Glad hearts without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not."

WORDSWORTH.

† Ben Jonson's 'Discoveries.'

and continued—"But prayer, my dear boy, to be efficacious must be enduring."

"Oh, uncle! I have been very wicked—very ungrateful——"

"No, Gerard," interrupted my uncle; "you have been guilty of a culpable neglect, but you have not been very wicked. You have thought, perhaps, that as you have *committed* no sin, you have had no occasion to pray, as forgiveness is the main object of our prayers; but it is not the sole object: and there are sins, you know, of *omission*. We may 'leave undone those things which we ought to do,' as well as 'do those things which we ought not to do.' But you know this, my dear boy; and therefore I need not enlarge upon the matter. You are a reader and an admirer of Wordsworth's poetry; do you know what he calls prayer?"

I pondered for a few moments, and then replied in the negative.

"I will tell you then," replied my uncle—

"A stream, which from the fountain of the heart
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
Without access of unexpected strength."

"Oh, uncle," I exclaimed,— "how true!—I have often been strengthened by prayer."

"Then pray night and morning, my dear boy; and you will be stronger than you are now. Be-

sides," added my uncle, "you are of a grateful nature; you are grateful to all your friends—even to me, who have done so little for you, very frequently do you express your gratitude. Human kindness never descends upon you unheeded or unacknowledged; why then are the exceeding goodnesses of God, which far surpass all earthly gifts, accepted by you with an unthankful heart? You cannot answer me; then, my dear boy, let 'the outgoings of the morning and evening praise Him;' and sometimes think that He is with you. Oh! indeed Gerard, it is a pleasant thing 'to build God a chapel in our heart.' 'Elige vitam optimam,' wrote Seneca — 'consuetudo faciet jucundissimam.'"

On another occasion, my good uncle said to me, "Gerard, I often hear you in your discourses making use of the words *Nature* and *Fate* in a manner more befitting a priest of Isis, than a worshipper of the Christian's God. Nature and Necessity were the deities of the Egyptians—the passive and active principles to which they referred all things. But we talk not in this wise. What is Necessity or Fate, or Destiny, but the will of God?—What is Nature but the operation of that will? The one the cause, the other the effect? But you will think, perhaps, that I am disputing about terms, and that my objections are mere verbal hypercriticism. You mean the same thing, do you?

Then to-morrow, perhaps, you will talk about an Avatar, and say that you mean the incarnation of Christ."

"My dear uncle !"

"There is nothing more dangerous than this confusion of terms. But it is most probable, Gerard, then, when you make use of the words *Nature* and *Fate*, you attach no distinctive meanings to them ; and that they merely serve as the indices of certain crude ideas in your mind. You use them chiefly because they are poetical ; and yours is a poetical temperament. Now tell me, when you talk about Nature and Fate, do you attach to these words any single idea of the Divinity ?"

I was obliged to confess that I did not. "But is it wrong," I asked, "to use the word *nature* ?"

"Not at all," replied my uncle,—"in its proper sense, — meaning thereby the operations of the Deity : but you speak of it as though it were the Deity itself. I have heard you talk about the 'will of nature,' the 'power of nature,' and so on, as though nature were an active principle ; indeed, as though it were the Great First Cause ; when it is only the effect of that cause. I know whence you derive these expressions, and there is no impurity in the source ; but you must remember, Gerard, that we allow to poetry a certain latitude of expression, which cannot be admitted in common conversation : and for this reason, that it is

dangerous to familiarize ourselves to any vagueness of expression which may in any way render less distinct our ideas of the thing to be expressed. I am sorry to say, my dear boy, that I have known many warm admirers of nature, who have been but indifferent worshippers of God; and I have heard the 'benignant powers of nature' extolled by those who have scoffed at the Deity. These are stern truths, Gerard; and I would not have touched upon them, but as a warning to you. I think that I have heard you say, that you are acquainted with the writings of Jeremy Taylor."

"Oh, yes, uncle!—I have read some of them very often."

"Then you cannot have forgotten that section of the *Holy Living*, 'On the Practice of the Presence of God.'—This good man does not talk about *nature*, but about the ubiquity of the Creator. You will find the volume on the second row of the shelves to your right-hand, as you enter the library."

And when I had brought the book to my uncle, he opened it, and presently he read: "Let everything you see, represent to your spirit the presence, the excellency, and the power of God; and let your conversations with the creature lead you to the Creator; for so shall your actions be done, more frequently with *an actual eye to God's presence, by frequently seeing him in the glass of the*

creation. In the face of the sun you may see God's beauty; in the fire you may feel his heat warming; in the water, his gentleness to refresh you." "You see, Gerard, that there is no talk about *nature* here. *His* theme is the omnipresence of God: and I cannot recommend to you a better ensample than this spiritual man, Jeremy Taylor."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "years ago, Mrs. Moore recommended his works to my perusal; and I have read them, but it appears with little profit."

"How strangely do events come to pass, in connection with one another!" replied my uncle. "I it was, who first directed the attention of Colonel Kirby to these writings; he recommends them to his wife; and she, in turn, to my nephew." And this led us to recur to the history of the Moores; and we spake no more of religion that day.

And whilst my uncle, by his precepts, was training me "in the way that I should go," my cousin Emily was constantly setting before me an example of kindness and love, which was equally, with the doctrines of her father, beneficial to my morality.

I had not been long in my uncle's house, before I began fully to comprehend the meaning of Smith's reproachful allusion to my neglect of those petty offices of kindness which ensure us so much love;—

“Those little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of charity and love,”

which Wordsworth calls, with exquisite truth, the “best portion of a good man’s life;” and which I hitherto had neglected as minutiae too paltry to be accounted in the least degree worthy of consideration. Resting satisfied with the consciousness that I was prepared to make any great sacrifices for those I loved, it had never occurred to me that I might conciliate affection by little acts of domestic kindness: but now, my cousin Emily taught me that I had all along been fatally in error. I scarcely believed Smith, when he told me that this neglect was the reason why I was no favourite at home; but my cousin Emily’s daily behaviour was a tacit, but a constant reproach to me: and beholding in her a line of conduct, directly opposite to my own, producing a directly opposite result, my heart acknowledged the truth of Smith’s strictures, and I beheld too plainly the full extent of my delinquency. There is no reproach that sinks into the heart so deeply as the sight of another performing,—and being rewarded for the performance of—those duties which we have failed in ourselves; and, therefore, every little act of kindness that my cousin Emily did,—and she was doing them all day long towards her father, or towards me,—reminded me of my own sins of

omission ; and I felt how very inferior in kindness, and in love, I was to my cousin Emily. But this sense of inferiority is a worker of much good ; and we are seldom mortified by the superior virtues of another very long before we endeavour to emulate them.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LONG-EXPECTED ONES.

“ Flowers are lovely, love is flower-like,
Friendship is a sheltering tree—
Oh ! the joys that came down shower-like,
Of friendship, love, and liberty,
Ere I was old.”

COLERIDGE.

ONE day—it was in the beginning of June—I was lying beneath a birch-tree upon the lawn, reading the Bible,—yes, reader, the Bible, for my uncle’s admonitions had wrought a very serious change upon the nature of my habits and reflections, and I had become, for I always fell into extremes, something very like a religious enthusiast, when my cousin Emily came running up to me, with a letter in either hand, and before she had reached the spot

where I was 'lying, she cried out to me in her gladsome, musical voice,—“Gerard, dear! what will you give me for these,—what will you give me for these letters?”

“A kiss, Emmy, love,” I replied.

“And will you pay your courier extraordinary no better than ‘that, Gerard?’” and my cousin Emily shook her beautiful ringlets, for she had run out to me bare-headed with the letters.

“A *thousand* kisses, Emmy, I will give you.”

My cousin Emily held up the letters above her head, and cried out, “News—news! plenty of news, Gerard,—foreign post-marks, and franks by Cabinet Ministers; they have made you Lord Chancellor at least.”

Up I started from my recumbent position, my heart beating almost audibly. “Oh! Emmy, give me the letters;—you little provoking creature you; come back, come back;”—for seeing my eagerness to possess the letters, she had run away—the playful little thing!—and I now heard her ringing laugh, as fawn-like she bounded across the lawn.—“Oh! come back, Emmy,” I exclaimed.

But on went my cousin Emily, so I ran after her, crying out, “Emmy, you dear creature, do stop;” but still she laughed, and still she bounded onward, her hair uplifted by the breeze, and the scarf, which she had thrown over her shoulders, streaming out, like a meteor, behind her. Soon,

for I was the fleetest of the two, I gained upon her, and at length I had caught her. "You provoking little creature, I will pay you for this," I exclaimed, as I clasped her in my arms, and smothered her forehead, cheeks, lips, neck, shoulders, all, with kisses. "Now, Emmy, give me the letters, for I am dying to see what they contain."

"Well, then, here they are," said my cousin Emily; "but you naughty man, you don't deserve them:—gently, Gerard, one at a time; it becomes you to be more patient;—now, here, you may take this first, it is a letter from Lord —, inviting you to be Lord Chancellor, or Lord Privy Seal, or something of that kind; and, here, Gerard, is the other from Paris,—from the king of France, I have not the smallest doubt; perhaps he has written to ask whether you will condescend to be English tutor to the Dauphin. And now, Gerard, I will leave you to digest these two important proposals;" and off ran my cousin Emily, singing all the way as she went.

My heart beat most violently, and I trembled all over as I looked at the superscriptions of these two letters. The one from Paris I immediately guessed to be a communication from Sir Reginald Euston; and the other, which was franked by a Cabinet Minister, I rather thought, contained the offer of a situation in one of the government offices, procured by the good baronet's instrumentality.

I was almost afraid to open this letter; I looked at the direction again, and again;—there was the hand-writing of Lord ——; but the letter had not come from London, but from his Lordship's country seat in H—shire, whither I knew he had withdrawn himself, though in the very middle of the session, for the purpose of recruiting his health. At length I summoned courage and tore open the envelope; the inclosure was addressed in a different hand-writing; I opened that also, and a bank-note fell from the letter upon the ground.

It was from Anstruther.—The letter commenced with “My dear young friend,” and ended with “very sincerely your obliged and grateful Edwin Anstruther.” His mother was only just dead, and he wrote to me the day after the funeral. Her sufferings had been protracted to a length surprising to all the faculty, and, throughout this time, Mr. Anstruther had watched constantly beside her, in a state of mind almost bordering upon delirium, and no thought had entered his brain unconnected with his poor mother. He implored me to look with kindness upon his neglect, and not to judge harshly of his seeming absence of honourable and gentleman-like feeling. In conclusion, he entreated that I would write to him;—“and” he added, “tell me, I beseech you, if there be any means whereby I may practically testify the gratitude that I have professed to you in words. Can

I serve you? Answer me frankly; and let no false delicacy prevent you from doing me this favour. I am longing to render you some service. What shall I do for you? I have money; I have interest—interest in the political and the literary worlds—interest in the army and in the church. Will you come and live with me? I have a large house, a wide park, horses and dogs, and game and fish in abundance; but I live alone—I am a companionless being—a fragment broken off from the main rock of humanity. My house is always a house of mourning, and I feel that I am not a companion for one in the spring season of his youth, full of hope, and life, and animal spirits; and I would not that my gloom should throw a shadow over the sunshine of your heart. I tell you, therefore, what you will find:—without, a beautiful country, extensive gardens, and pleasure-grounds, every thing that you can desire, if you be a sportsman, whether you hunt, shoot, or fish;—within, a well-stored library, a picture gallery not wholly worthless, and a childless, broken-hearted old man, who will open his arms to receive you, and pour upon you the little love that is not buried with the dead in their graves.'

Large tear-drops rolled down my cheeks as I read these affecting passages in poor Anstruther's letter. "I knew it," said I, "I never doubted his truth; I was always sure that some day he

would write to me,—and so kind too,—oh ! yes, I will go to him. He wants me ; he wants a friend ; he is childless, I will be to him a son ;”——but here I checked myself, and thus continued my soliloquy. “ No, no, this must not be ; Gerard Doveton, this must not be. He is rich ; he has no children ; and if there be a pitiful creature in the world, I am sure that creature is a legacy-hunter. No, Gerard Doveton, into the affections of this man you worm not yourself honestly. Away with the debasing thought at once !—not so fallen, not so mean, not so contemptible as that ——” and then I cried aloud in all the enthusiasm of truth,—“ Oh ! would that Mr. Anstruther were poor !”

“ But I will thank him,” I thought, “ I will thank him for his kindness. I will write to him this moment, and pour out the gratitude of my heart ;”——and thinking this, I entered the house, and ran to my chamber, that I might be alone whilst I wrote, for I was much moved, and the tears were standing in mine eyes, and my bosom laboured with a weight of feelings not to be suppressed.

I took the pen into my hand, and I wrote with inconceivable rapidity. Three pages were speedily covered, and then I crossed them, and I said a number of things, all signifying nothing ; then I signed my name to this precious document, and

tried to read what I had been writing, but I could scarcely decipher the characters, and what I did decipher, was so extravagant, so meaningless, and so confused, that it might have gone far, in any court of justice, to prove the fact of my insanity. This letter I immediately destroyed, and began another, which was too formal, too cold, too artificial; this I tore to pieces, and then I commenced a third, which pleased me no better than its fore-runners. Then again I wrote, "*my dear Sir,*" but I could not think of an apt beginning, so I opened Anstruther's letter, and read it over once more from beginning to end; and whilst I was racking my brain for an exordium, I looked at the envelope, and at the seal, without any definite intentions. There was something, however, in the seal, that particularly attracted my notice. It was a coat-of-arms, and I thought that I had seen the quarterings thereof before; the wax was broken, but I put the pieces together, and then scrutinized the minute figures impressed upon them very closely. I was positive that I had somewhere seen those armorial bearings before. I pondered, and taxed my memory,—then looked again at the seal,—I *had* seen those figures before, and under peculiar circumstances; those three lions rampant, and the boar's head, and the fleur-de-lis, they were familiar to me; but where had I seen them? I asked myself many a time in vain.

But at length the truth flashed upon my brain ; and starting up, I moved across the room, and knelt before a large box. My heart almost stood still, and my hand trembled so violently, that it was some time before I could unlock the chest, and take from it a little book, with which I returned to the writing table ; and then again I seated myself down, and looked at the mysterious seal.

The little book was the copy of Erasmus' Colloquies, with which Mrs. Moore had presented me, and wherein I had discovered the fifty-pound note so strangely inserted between its pages.

I opened it ; perhaps it will be remembered that there was the engraving of a coat-of-arms within the cover of the volume. One glance was sufficient to assure me, that the armorial bearings upon the seal, and in the book, were precisely identical. ' I ' compared them, there was not a shade of difference ; and, moreover, the initials E. A. were in the book, and my friend's name was Edwin Anstruther.

And this little book, this copy of Erasmus, had actually belonged to Anstruther ! How passing strange !—how inextricably interwoven seemed all the circumstances relating to the Moores ! I asked myself " Can it be possible that he, Edwin Anstruther, has any knowledge of my humble friends ? " Then I answered, " It may be ; yes, it may be ;

and I will ask him ; I will put the question to him at once ; I will say to him, " Mr. Anstruther, can you throw any light upon the obscurity which now envelopes the history of the Moores ? Did you know General Kirby ? do you know Mrs. Moore ? " And then a wild fancy entered my brain, which was extinguished almost as soon as it was conceived ; and I said to myself, " No, this cannot be ; for he has himself told me that he is childless."

Then a season of calmer reflection ensued ; and it occurred to me that, without any agency of romance, this little volume of Erasmus' Colloquies might have passed from Mr. Anstruther into the possession of Mrs. Moore. Books and horses change their owners more frequently than any other description of property. Almost every book-collector, in the course of his life, has five or six different libraries ; it is the delight of a bibliomanist to sell off, and to collect anew ; besides, duplicate copies find their way into the market from all the first libraries in England, even from that of the British Museum. It was certainly a singular coincidence, that this volume should have passed into my hands ; but, perhaps, there is scarcely a collector in the world, who has not stumbled, in the shops of the dealers, upon many books, which have erst belonged to his most intimate friends ; and had I lived a few years longer

'in the world, I should have been less surprised by this "coincidence." But youth is the season of "the marvellous :"—as we grow older, we cease to wonder, even at that which is really wonderful ; we pass from Fairy-land, into a world of commonplace, and I cannot say that we gain much by the change.

But I thought to myself, there can be no harm in just asking Mr. Anstruther, whether he knows the name of Kirby or of Moore ; and, having arrived at this conclusion, I once more began to write.

CHAPTER X.

THE TALENT MULTIPLIED.

‘ He who risks nothing will gain nothing ever ;
I cannot think it wise to garner up
Our merchandize and never put to sea.
Men may be over-cautious.—I have dared,
And a great triumph has just crowned my darings.”

MS.

“ GERARD, dear, have you lost any thing ?” said my cousin Emily, as she met me in the hall, about two hours after the receipt of my letters.

“ Oh !• yes, Emma, I am just going out to look. I left one of my letters beneath the Birch-tree.”

“ A letter—and nothing else ?” asked my cousin

Emily, looking into my face so archly that I could not help exclaiming,—

“Why, you look whole volumes, my dear Emma.”

“Volumes! Do I look *Bank Notes*? Again I ask, what have you lost?”

I could no longer be in ignorance of her meaning, and I replied, “Why, yes, Emily, I have lost a Bank Note—that is to say, I must have left one beneath the tree, for I cannot find it in my pockets.”

“Oh! a Bank Note—you have lost a Bank Note,” returned my cousin Emily, in her usual playful manner; “but you must identify it, Gerard, before I give it to you; now tell me what was the number?”

“*The number?* Have Bank Notes numbers? Upon my word, Emmy, I don’t know.”

Emily laughed, for child as she was, she knew more about these matters than did I. “So you don’t know the number of the note; then tell me what was its amount?”

“Oh! yes,” I exclaimed, “that I *can* tell you—it was worth thirty pounds.”

“*Thirty!*” said my cousin Emily, folding up the note, “then this belongs to somebody else.”

“Strange,” said I, “but I believe that you are jesting; you pretty, little, dear, playful rogue; and,

Emmy love, Mark you, I promise that if you play the cheat any longer, I will punish you, as I did this morning, by smothering you all over with kisses."

"Oh! I don't mind that," replied Emily; "besides, I only speak the truth.* If your note was worth but thirty pounds, this cannot well be yours, dear Gerard. Unless, indeed," she added, playfully, "some benignant wood-nymph has descended from the birch-tree, in your absence, and trebled the amount of your money with the addition of a ten pound note."

"What do you mean, Emmy?"

"Have birch-trees any peculiar effect upon the paper money of the Bank of England?"

"You speak in riddles, love. I don't know what you mean; but you are determined to try my patience to-day."

"It is good for you. You are much too impetuous; but you have behaved tolerably well on the whole. So I will tell you at once, Gerard, that I have found beneath the birch-tree, where you were lying in the morning, this letter—the king of France's letter about the Dauphin; with what indignity you have treated it!—and beside it, there was an hundred pound note, which I suppose, was a little acknowledgment from the Prime Minister, for value received, great Gerard."

"An hundred pound note, Emmy? Oh! show it to me; you must be in jest."

"Nay, Gerard, look at it, then—but you must not take it, for it cannot be yours. If you snatch it, 'twill be highway robbery, or some such heinous offence."

I looked at the note; and Mr. Henry Hase had certainly promised to pay me, on demand, the sum of one hundred pounds. It was very strange; I had lent Anstruther thirty, and he had returned me one hundred pounds.

"Well, Emmy, I am very much astonished—but this is the first that I have seen of the note;" and then I told her who had remitted the money, and acquainted her with all that had passed between Mr. Anstruther, and myself.

She pretended to be very much disappointed, and put on a mock expression of mortification.

"I thought it was from *the* Prime Minister, and it turns out to be from a Mr. Anstruther—somebody, that nobody knows."

"Nay, Emmy; not that. Somebody knows Mr. Anstruther, for Lord —, one of the Cabinet Ministers, has franked his letter to me."

As she said this, Mr. Pemberton joined us, and he told him the whole history of Mr. Anstruther, and the Bank Note.

"It is no more than you deserve, Gerard," said

my kind uncle, "for your excessive generosity; your good Samaritanship, almost I may say;" and the tears glistened in his eyes, as he spoke, "Nothing is more becoming to youth, than *trustiness*, if I may invent such a word. Suspicion, always unlovely, is loathsome in a young person. Let people say that you acted unwisely, if they will—depend upon it, that you acted nobly. Trust in the integrity of your fellows, as long as you can, my dear boy, for this world becomes very barren, as soon as we begin to suspect."

"But, uncle, you do not think that it would become me to retain this money."

"In a moral sense, perfectly—in a conventional, perhaps not."

"And I cannot do wrong by returning it?"

"I am not sure of that," replied my uncle, "by returning it, you may cause pain to another—and it is always wrong to cause pain, when it can be spared without offending against virtue."

And thus I was placed in a dilemma. I did not like to retain the money; and I did not like to return it.

So not wishing to analyze the nature of my obligations with too much subtlety, I said to Mr. Pemberton, "Uncle, I have received a letter, this day, from my good friend Sir Reginald Euston."

"And what says the worthy Baronet?"

"Oh! I will tell you presently."—And I opened the letter. "Sir Reginald was in Paris when he wrote—"

"And Leonard Kirby?"

I read a little further, and then answered "Leonard is dead."

I continued to read, and presently I exclaimed, "Oh! what do you think, uncle? Sir Reginald is going to be married."

"And who the lady to be blessed with such a husband?"

"*Emma Kirby*—the sister of his poor friend, and the daughter of Mrs. Moore, who is one of Sir Reginald's tenants. How strangely things come to pass—do they not, my dear uncle!"

"Not strangely, but happily and wisely are these events ordered by Providence. The same interposition that has deprived poor Emma of a brother has bestowed upon her the best of husbands. Seldom does God smite us without pouring balm into our wounds."

"And this too such a special interposition," I replied—"Destiny—"

"God, Gerard"—

"Forgive me, uncle—I had forgotten your admonishments; but I was going to say that, by this tissue of events, God has not only presented Emma Kirby with the very best of men for a hus-

band, but has restored to her a long lost parent; for they *must* meet together, mother and daughter, when Sir Reginald takes his bride to the hall."

"And that meeting—" returned my uncle thoughtfully, "will be a painful meeting, and perhaps, better avoided. Yet you say that the widow Moore is a good woman."

"Oh! one of the best,"—I exclaimed, lifting my eyes from Sir Reginald's letter. Then I added, "Emma Kirby and the baronet were fellow-travellers from London to Paris. Poor Leonard had written to his sister, beseeching her to bless him before he died; but she was resolved to do more—to *nurse* him—to smooth his dying pillow, and to close the eyes of her brother after death. For this holy purpose she set out for Paris, accompanied only by her maid. On board the Calais steamer Sir Reginald became acquainted with her name; then he addressed her, and a mutual explanation very soon was exchanged between them. It would have been wonderful if, under such circumstances, love had not sprung up in their hearts. I cannot fancy any situation more likely to engender mutual affection."

"Nor I, Gerard—and the most enduring affection—that which begins with veneration—"

"And sympathy," I added, "where veneration is—and sympathy—love cannot be very far behind."

"May they be as happy as they deserve to be," said my uncle; "but tell me, Gerard, when are they to be married?"

"Not yet, uncle; for it would not be becoming, they think, to throw aside the mourning-garment too soon;—but before the winter, for it is Sir Reginald's intention to spend his Christmas at the Hall."

"And what are they to do in the interim?"

"Emma is living with a friend, a cousin of her father's, in Paris; and it is Sir Reginald's intention to dwell there also; for he has taken a house, until the celebration of his nuptials."

"That is well," said my uncle Pemberton; "and you have a good friend in Sir Reginald Euston. He seems to like you, Gerard; for he has made you his confidant. 'Tis a good thing to have many friends."

"Oh, uncle! and he is the kindest of men;—this letter is full of kindness. He promised, before he set out for Paris, that he would exert all his interest to procure me a situation in one of the government-offices. I have for some time been expecting to hear from him; and now he tells me that he has not been idle in my behalf; that he has had the choice offered him of two or three situations, all of which he has declined, not thinking that they are good enough for me; but that,

being well aware that a personal application is always more efficacious than a written one, he recommends my waiting patiently until the winter, when he promises that he will spare no exertion to obtain me the best situation procurable by interest of no ordinary power."

"Then do so, by all means," said my uncle;—"you are young, and a few months' delay cannot be of any serious consequence. I confess, though," he added, with a benevolent smile, "that I am an interested party, and therefore, perhaps, not quite capable of giving the soundest advice: for you must know, Gerard, that neither Emmy nor myself are particularly desirous that you should leave us; and as long as we think that you are happy—and we *do* think so, at present, my dear boy,—we intend to do our best to detain you amongst us:—do we not, Emmy, my dear?"

"Oh, yes!" cried my cousin Emily; "we do indeed; and we *will* keep you, Gerard,—you shall be our prisoner; and if you attempt to escape, I will bind you with chains of adamant, like the captive knight in the story." And then she added, laying both her hands upon my shoulders, and looking beseechingly into my face, "but you do not wish to leave us, I am sure?—we shall have no occasion for the chains."

"For no other chains than those which now

bind me, and they are more enduring than adamant:—fetters of *love*, Emmy, dearest!—and they will not suffer me to escape.”

Then my uncle said, “Gerard, you must not consider yourself as a visitor only in this house.—Why should you *ever* leave us?—Nay, do not misunderstand me: I would not, for the whole world, that you should eat the bread of idleness, my dear boy: I should be your worst enemy, were I to propose such a step.—‘Give a young man a bible and a *calking*, and you have done your best for him,’ said a certain divine. No, Gerard, I was only about to tell you, that my house shall be always to you a home. Your avocations will most probably bring you to the metropolis, and then we will domesticate you here. We love you, Gerard;—Emmy and I, we love you: Emmy, as a brother, and I, my dear boy, as a son. But we will talk over your future prospects more at length, by and bye. In the meantime, at all events, you must promise to abide with us ’till Sir Reginald returns.”

My heart was too full to answer,—I looked the gratitude that I could not speak; and having pressed my uncle’s hand, and kissed Emily on the forehead, I left the room that I might give vent to my feelings in the solitude of my own chamber, and offer up my thanksgivings to God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PUPPET-WIRES.

“ ——— Well, now, my fortune’s made ;
 I shall walk proudly with my head in the air ;
 Who says I am not great ? Why duck ye not,
 When I pass by ; I am the ripest wit
 That ever trod *Paul’s* walk ; I pray ye, gentlemen,
 Not to forget my merits.”

Old Play.

THAT night before I addressed myself to sleep, I wrote two letters — one to Mr. Anstruther, and the other to Sir Reginald Euston. • Both were expressive of the most heartfelt gratitude. To the former I returned the surplus money that he had sent me, merely saying that there was some mistake, and promised at some future period to visit him at Charlton Abbey. I then asked him, for I was fully determined to investigate, if there were any,

the mystery of the *Erasmus*, whether he had ever known General Kirby, “because,” I added somewhat deceptively, “his son died the other day at Paris, and Sir Reginald Euston, my kind friend, has betrothed himself to Miss Kirby, the sole surviving child of the General, and they are to be married at the latter end of the autumn.” I did this that Mr. Anstruther might not think that the question I had put to him was dictated by any more cogent feeling than that of a common curiosity to ascertain whether one’s friends are acquainted with one another; and my intimacy with Sir Reginald Euston rendered the inquiry a perfectly natural one.

Having put this question to Mr. Anstruther, I proceeded to answer one he had put to me. Could he help me? Was there any possible means whereby he might render me a service? To this I replied in the affirmative — “Yes, my dear Sir,” thus I wrote, “you can serve me; and willingly, do I accept your kind offer of assistance, advanced, as I am sure it is, with so much sincerity. You say that you have interest in the *literary* world; it is to this quarter that my desires turn themselves, for I have often hoped to distinguish myself as an author. I dare say that you are not ignorant of the difficulties which impede the progress of a young writer along the paths of fame — the many extraneous circumstances which are the making or

the undoing of the young aspirer — circumstances, which have often prostrated the traveller at the very outset of his journey to the land of promise, which he sees afar-off, and pants eagerly to reach. But to speak more definitely, my dear sir, — I have written and am now correcting a work of fiction which I am desirous to lay before the world, should it be deemed by competent judges worthy of such a distinction? Can you introduce me to a publisher, who will attend to me, and cause my manuscripts to be read, and publish them if worthy of publication. By doing this you will confer on me an infinite obligation; for you will satisfy by this act of kindness the desire nearest to my heart. How very good of you to offer thus to befriend one of whom you know so little as myself!"

Not many days after the transmission of this letter, I received a communication from Mr. —, one of our most eminent Metropolitan Publishers. He understood that I had a work of fiction ready for the press, and he requested the honour of introducing it to the world. Would I favour him by forwarding the MSS. to his address, that he might place them immediately in the hands of his reader, though he added that there could be little doubt of their merits, as they had been recommended to his attention by one of the first scholars of the day.

" Blessings wait on thee, thou kind-hearted

man ! — my generous patron, Anstruther !” I exclaimed. My heart overflowed with gratitude. My first impulse was immediately to set out for Charlton Abbey, that I might throw myself at the feet of my benefactor, and kiss the hem of his garment. But I remembered that my presence was required in the metropolis, and I resolved at once to call upon Mr. —, with my MSS., thinking that I should cause greater pleasure to Anstruther, by acquainting him with the happy results of his kindly intentions towards me. This I did. With the two first volumes of my book, I waited upon my friendly publisher, who received me with the utmost urbanity and kindness, complimenting me upon my extreme youth, and prophesying my future celebrity. He put into my hands some sheets of an unpublished work by one of our most celebrated authors, and requested me to amuse myself by perusing them, whilst he just glanced at the contents of my manuscripts.

I took the papers into my hand, but I read not a single line; for I was in a woeful state of nervous excitement, and I could not take my eyes off the face of the publisher, whilst he was turning over the pages of my manuscripts. I watched every change upon his countenance in an agony of tremulous suspense. I was never less composed in my life. My temples throbbed, and all my pulses galloped, and my teeth chattered as though I had been

seized with an ague fit. But this torture endured not very long. The bookseller in less than a quarter of an hour rose from the table where he was sitting, unlocked a writing-desk, and took therefrom a small slip of paper, his face wearing all this time an aspect of peculiar benevolence.

What could he be about? — I watched him with straining eyes; he was writing something upon the slip of paper that he had taken from his desk. But perhaps, after all, it related not to me, perhaps, merely a memorandum of some thoughts that had accidentally flashed across his mind. But no; for his pen was stopped suddenly, and he said, “Mr. Doveton, will you favour me with your christian name?”

My voice was almost inaudible, as it faltered out “Gerard.”

“Gerard, or Gerald?” asked the bookseller.

“Gerard.”

“Then I hope Mr. Gerard Doveton will suffer me to publish his manuscripts, and accept this note as a small return for the favour he will confer on me by so doing.”

And so saying, the bookseller put into my hands the slip of paper on which he had been writing.

I looked at it; and I saw that the letters upon it were partly in print and partly in my manuscript; but my brain swam round so dizzily, that it was some time before I could decipher the cha-

racters. At length I read something about "paying Gerard Doveton, Esq. or bearer, the sum of three hundred pounds."

I started with surprise, and exclaimed eagerly, "You don't mean to say, Mr. —, that my MSS. are worth *this*!"

"We are not much in the habit," replied the bookseller with a smile, "of giving more money for manuscripts than they are worth. If you are contented with your bargain, I can assure you that I am well satisfied with mine."

"But," said I, "you have not read them — you do not know what the book contains. Had you not better take time to consider this far too liberal offer?"

Then the bookseller still smiling, replied, "Authors, I assure you, Mr. Doveton, are not wont to be so scrupulous as this."

"Nor publishers so liberal," said I.

"Never fear," returned Mr. —, "that a young author, in a negotiation of this kind, will get the better of an old bookseller. No, Mr. Doveton, you need not alarm yourself on my account; depend upon it that I am quite safe."

"You shall be that;" said I, "for if the work do not pay —"

"Good morning," interrupted the bookseller, "let me have the third volume as soon as possible — good morning to you — oh! it's sure to pay;

you need not distress yourself — a good morning — I will send you the proofs by the twopenny,” — and the worthy publisher quitted the room, resolutely determined not to hear another word from my mouth concerning the bargain, that I considered so detrimental to his interests, and so advantageous to mine. So I sallied forth into the streets, scarcely knowing whither I went, with mingled feelings of astonishment, pride, gratitude and joy. Could it be possible that a boy of nineteen had written a book worth three hundred pounds ? I asked myself this question again and again ; and when I recurred to what had just passed in the bookseller’s parlour, I could not help thinking that there had been some juggle practised upon me — that I was labouring under a delusion of mind, and that the bookseller had not given me the three hundred pounds ; — but there was the cheque in my waistcoat pocket ; I took it out and read what was written upon it ; and there was the Banker’s name, and my name, and Mr. — —’s name, — it was very certain that the money was mine.

My proper course lay westward ; but I was journeying on towards the city, in a state of rather pleasant abstraction. I was already a great man in embryo, I was the author of ‘ Drayton, the Dreamer.’

I had just received three-hundred pounds for an intellectual creation, so entirely my own, that no one but myself had ever looked upon its pages ;

the sun of my fame¹ would soon appear above the horizon, and dazzle the whole world; unassisted and alone I had accomplished all this—nay, neither unassisted nor alone,—without Austruther, what should I have been? *Quisque suæ faber fortunæ*: every man the architect of his own fortune;—yes, the architect; and I had modelled, but I required the agency of others to build—but the word *faber* signified a workman, not a designer—was Sallust then right, when he put these words together?—but *was* Sallust the author of this aphorism?—oh! yes, it was certainly Sallust—no, it was Appius as quoted by Sallust—“*id verum esse, quod in carminibus Appius ait, fabrum esse suæ fortunæ.*” It was Appius then; but Sallust confirms the truth of it—*id verum esse*. But I neither agreed with Appius the poet, nor with Sallust the historian; and it was not presumption in me to differ from them; for I was Doveton the Novellist; and I questioned whether either Appius or Sallust had received three hundred pounds for a work.

And thus I went on soliloquizing, first on one subject, then on another—speculating, devising, looking forward with the eye of hope, or retrospectively with the eye of memory, quite wrapped up in a shroud of thought, for I was insensible to the goings on of the visible world, and I knew not whether I was traversing a crowded thoroughfare, or a desert plain. Now, Mr. Godwin has said in

his *Enquirer*, and I will quote the passage, though I am well aware that the author of the *Pursuits of Literature* has laughed it to scorn with an excess of ridicule, which is in itself ridiculous. Mr. Godwin says, that a man of genius walking from Temple Bar to Hyde Park Corner, "gives good scope to his imagination. He laughs and cries. Unindebted to the suggestions of surrounding objects, his whole soul is employed. He enters into nice calculations; he digests sagacious reasonings. He imagines, he declaims or describes, impressed with the deepest sympathy, or elevated to the loftiest rapture. He makes a thousand new and admirable combinations. He passes through a thousand imaginary scenes, tries his courage, and tasks his ingenuity. He consults, by the aid of memory, the books he has read, and projects others for the future instruction and delight of mankind." It is very certain that I did all this and more, as I walked, after my interview with Mr. —, the publisher, eastward, through the streets of the metropolis, and it is certain also, that at this period of my life, I regarded myself as a man of genius, and I actually had all those erratic propensities which are common to an overbearing imagination. For example, at the time which now my history has reached, I was walking in precisely a contrary direction to that in which my proper course was lying; and men of genius generally consider it

necessary to lose their way now and then, not so much in the streets of a metropolis, as in the crowded thoroughfares of life. I do believe that many great luminaries have gone astray, to keep up their character, as though virtue and genius never went hand-in-hand: but these gentlemen, indeed, arrogate to themselves a peculiar description of intelligence, the chief office of which, is to run counter to common sense; for they who aspire to genius, lay no claims whatever to wisdom—a quality indeed which they very much despise, deeming that it is only becoming to doctors of divinity, duennas, and judges, to be wise. I have scarcely ever read the biography of one of these “geniuses” that has not been a miserable record of all kinds of folly. And what is “a man of genius?” I have heard it said,—“So-and-so is a profound thinker, a man of extreme erudition, a subtle analyst, a most elegant scholar, but he is not ‘a man of genius.’” Is Mr. Wordsworth a man of genius? “Oh! no,” says a young disciple of the lose-your-way-in-strange-places school, “Mr. Wordsworth is a great and original thinker, but he is not a ‘man of genius.’” Who then are the men of genius? “Oh! Byron, Rousseau, Alfieri, Shelley, and men of that calibre, my good Sir.”

But to my story. I was walking eastward; like the renowned Chrononhotontologos, with,—

My cogitative faculties immersed
In cogibundity of cogitation,

when suddenly I felt a hand upon my shoulder, whilst at the same time a well-known voice exclaimed, "How d'you do, Doveton? where are you going now?"

It was Smith.—I awoke as from a dream, and shook my friend cordially by the hand. I was certainly very glad to see him.—"Which way are you going, Doveton?" said he.

"To Piccadilly."

"And a strange route you are following!" returned Smith. "Walking eastward along the Strand, with Temple Bar staring you in the face, you tell me that you are going to Piccadilly."

"Well, to be sure, I am all wrong. How stupid of me! I quite forgot myself, and which way I was going—but I am in no hurry, I will walk with you.—How came you in London?"

"Long vacation—start for Liverpool to-night. But tell me, have you heard from Anstruther?"

"Yes."

"And he has sent you the money?"

"He has—a hundred pound-note. You see that I was right after all."

"Perhaps not.—I dare say, my dear fellow, that the note he has sent you is a forgery."

"Good God!—Smith," I exclaimed, quite angry, "the demon of suspicion has entered your soul."

“And yet I am not always in error.”

“I don’t know, Smith — you have been singularly unfortunate in your surmises of late. Here is a gentleman of elegant address, one of the first scholars in the kingdom, a large landed proprietor, and a friend of his Majesty’s Ministers; you set him down as a sharper and a forger, and tell me that I am his dupe, when, indeed, I am most deeply indebted to him.”

“A regular flare-up, as the fast men say at Oxford — but tell me what has he done to make you so deeply indebted to him?”

“He has introduced me to Mr. —, the great publisher, and Mr. — has given me three hundred pounds for ‘the worthless manuscripts of a boy of nineteen.’”

Then Smith after a few moments’ silence, returned, “I confess, Doveton, that I *have* been, as you say, ‘singularly unfortunate in my surmises.’ I am very glad to find that I have been in error, and I congratulate you most sincerely upon the fortunate up-shot of your adventure. You have made a friend of the *real* Mr. Anstruther; and he, I need scarcely tell you, is a first-rate man, for you appear to be well acquainted with his qualifications. And so you are to appear in the world of letters, with Mr. —’s name on your title page.”

“I am — do you know, Smith, I have been

labouring for some time past under very erroneous impressions with regard to the publishing fraternity. I took them to be a wary, hard-bargaining sort of men, and I find them, instead of this, the most liberal set of fellows in the world."

Smith smiled a smile of incredulity, and I continued, "Well, at all events, I have found one liberal publisher."

But still Smith smiled, "What! don't you believe me?" said I.

"I fully believe the fact; but not exactly the inference you have drawn from it."

"And why not? — if Mr. — has given three hundred pounds for the first work of an inexperienced boy, he is certainly a most liberal man. The inference is perfectly just."

Smith was silent. It was evident that he suspected something, but that he did not like to declare his suspicions. "Now tell me, Smith, what do you mean by that smile of incredulity — speak out, if you suspect anything; pray tell me at once — I suppose another 'unfortunate surmise' — Mr. — has given me a forged note, and he is a sharper like Mr. Anstruther. Eh! Smith?" and I began to banter the man of sense most unmercifully.

Then at length Smith, his patience, for which he was so remarkable, beginning to desert him, exclaimed, "The fact is, that Mr. Anstruther, not Mr. —, has given you this money."

“What do you mean?”

“Precisely what I say. You have a friend behind the curtain.”

“And by Apollo!” I thought to myself, though I did not like to acknowledge the suspicion, “I believe that you are right, John Smith, though without you this would never have occurred to me.”

CHAPTER XII.

GOLD DUST.

‘ Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,
The signet of its all-enslaving power
Upon a shining ore, and calls it gold ;
Before whose image bow the vulgar great—

Gold is a living *god*, and rules in scorn
All earthly things but virtue.”

SHELLEY.

My book was soon finished, and in the hands of the printers, who were anxious to bring it out before the close of the London season. I did not say a word to my uncle upon the subject of my literary venture ; for I thought it would be better to spare him all participation in my pain and disappointment, in the event of my work proving a failure ; and I did not think it at all improbable that such a catastrophe was awaiting it, for Smith’s

'allusion to "a friend 'behind the 'curtain," had entirely dispersed the mist of pleasant delusion that had surrounded me, and I no longer regarded myself as a successful young author, receiving for his first work three hundred pounds from a wary publisher; it was too plain that latent interest had been working in my favour, and that, however ridiculous and imbecile my work may have been, it would still have brought the three hundred pounds to my treasury.

Yet Smith's surmises, I thought, may have been erroneous; and I could not act upon any such conjecture, nor return Anstruther the money as I had done upon a former occasion. So I merely wrote to him, detailing the issue of my interview with the bookseller, and pouring out a thousand expressions of gratitude to my generous and kind-hearted patron. When I had dispatched this letter, I said to myself, "I will devote this money to the Moores."

I had nearly four hundred pounds in my possession, but I did not know how to dispose of it in a manner most serviceable to my friends. Should I procure with it a situation for Michael, or purchase an annuity for Mrs. Moore, or give them the money at once to dispose of as they deemed best? I could not consult my uncle, for then I must have told him the whole history of my literary adventures, which I was not desirous to do; so after

pondering, and devising schemes, and balancing one thing against another, I resolved that I would at once remit the money to Mrs. Moore, and enable her to do with it as she pleased, well assured that she would dispose of it in a way advantageous to her children.

So retaining only thirty pounds for myself, I paid the remainder of my treasure into the Bank, and procured a bank post bill to the amount thereof; this I inclosed in a blank cover, and my cousin Emily directed it for me, as I was most anxious that my friends should not know who was their benefactor. This done, I put the letter myself into *the* General Post-Office, saying, "There can now be no clue, whereby the gift is traceable to me."

But I had previously written to Michael, informing him of my successful negotiation, and promising that I would send him a copy of my book, directly it was out of the hands of the printer; and Michael had replied to this letter immediately, foretelling my future fame, and saying, how proud they all were of being my humble friends. Ella too had added a few words to the letter;—"I told you that you could not fail; and was I not a prophetess, Gerard?"

Before many days had elapsed, I received another letter from Michael, containing the history of the bank post bill, and all their surmises concern-

ing it. Nothing could shake Mrs. Moore's conviction, that her lost son Larry was their upseen benefactor; and this full assurance seemed likely to irradiate with a broad sun-light the obscurity of her soul. "My mother's faith," thus wrote Michael Moore, "is so strong, and so cheering, that neither Ella nor I have breathed a syllable that may weaken it. 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,' she exclaimed, when she beheld the note and the blank cover containing it,—'for my son is treading the paths of prosperity, and though absent from me, I feel that he is happy.' It is a blessed thing, indeed, for my mother, that such a belief should have entered her soul. But we, dear Gerard, Ella and I, think, nay, we know otherwise. *You* are our benefactor. It is so like you to do a kindness, and to be unwilling that they, whom you serve, should feel beholden to *you*. Ella declares that nothing can ever persuade her to think otherwise. She is sure that you have done this, and in truth, so am I, dear Gerard."

And here I must confess, that with all my generosity, I should have felt rather disappointed if they had not suspected me to be their latent benefactor. I had sent the money thus mysteriously, to insure myself against having it returned to me; but, though I was determined that they should not *know* me to be the donor of it, I should have been

it, then hurt if they had not *suspected* me. And this feeling was not so pitiful and ungenerous as it may appear to be at first, for it originated in my excessive love for Michael and Ella, and my desire to feel myself beloved by them in turn. If I had doted on them less, it would have been a matter of indifference to me whether they had suspected me or not, for I do not crave after the praise and gratitude of the herd ; but loving them so deeply, and yearning so intensely after their love, I felt that not to suspect me, would be not to love, or at least not to love me so entirely as I desired to be loved ; for any act of kindness and generosity done towards us by an invisible agent, we are wont to attribute always unto him whom we think most kind, and whom we most love for his kindness. Thus it was that my heart rejoiced when I knew that Ella and Michael Moore suspected me to be their benefactor.

But Michael's letter contained other matter than this—matter, indeed, which made the pulses of my heart throb with unwonted rapidity. He had remembered something more of his early days, and he hastened to communicate to me the remembrance. And thus he wrote : “ I promised to tell you if any new reminiscences should rise up in my mind. The other day it happened that I was at ——mouth,” (this was a little sea-port town, a few miles distant from Grass-hill) ; “ and

I had been sketching—my book was in my hand, when, seeing some fishermen put out to sea, I requested them to take me into their boat, that I might view the appearance of the land from the water, and make a drawing of the town, and the bay, and the distant scenery. Willingly did the fishermen suffer me to accompany them, but we had not long been at sea, before a violent squall came on, and for a period our little craft was actually in imminent peril. Well, dear Gerard, in the midst of this commotion of the elements, it suddenly flashed across my memory, that I had once before, in the early days of my childhood, been thrown into a similar embarrassment. There is a strange power in association to awaken dormant reminiscences, and if it had not been for this little incident of the squall, and the fishing boat, I should never have remembered the storm at sea, which endangered my life when I was an infant. But now I can recall, with much vividness, the ship and the swollen ocean—the rain, the thunder, the lightning, the noise and confusion there was on board—and all the circumstances attending a tempest, if not a wreck. Indeed, Gerard, I think that our vessel went to pieces, and that another came to our rescue. This was some time before we came to Grass-hill; but what passed in the interim, I have tasked my memory in vain to re-

member. Ella remembers nothing of this, but she is a year younger than myself, and a year at this early period of life, makes a great difference in all our retrospections. I attach no great importance to this reminiscence ; it seems to throw no additional light upon the darkness which we are so anxious to pierce ; but time, time, dear Gerard, I will be patient and abide my time."

But, I thought, as I continued to read, that many strange and uncertain longings had entered poor Michael's breast. It was plain to me, that a sort of aristocratic instinct was smouldering within him, and that he was yearning after a better state, a more exalted condition. "He is weary of his peasant life," thought I ; "but he is striving, with all his might, to stifle the cravings of his soul. Beneath all his thoughtful serenity there is lurking a troubled spirit, which day and night he wrestles against in vain. He is calm, because he *will* be calm ; but his calmness is artificial ; and nature, within him, is stronger than art. What are all his dreams of palaces, and garden-walks, but the aspirations of a soul, panting to emerge from the obscurity of a cottage life, and only contented upon principle ? By faith alone is he sustained ; for he believes that his time will come ; but little knows he what I know, or his heart would beat quicker than it does, and his faith increase tenfold in strength." And as thus

I soliloquized, I set forth upon one of my almost daily excursions to the great metropolis.

I frequently visited the Printing-office, and I did not find the printers so troublesome a set of people as they are represented. I behaved courteously towards them, and in turn they did their utmost to please me. I exacted little, and therefore I obtained much. I am always very urbane and tolerant towards my inferiors; and, if ever I am hard and uncompromising, it is towards them who consider themselves superior to me. This is by no means an uncommon trait; and I think that it originates in pride—not in frothy, superficial, arrogance, but in genuine, deep-seated pride. An arrogant man is imperious, a proud man condescending, towards the lowly. The one despises those beneath him, the other hates those above him. The proudest men are the kindest to their inferiors; they love the poor for being poor, and they are most courteous towards those whom it is the greatest condescension to favour. Arrogance loves to trample upon,—Pride, to patronize, the humble. I was a proud man; I certainly was not an arrogant one.

So week after week passed away; my work was advertised, with certain preliminary flourishes, which, I must say, rather disgusted me. But I bore the infliction with the most exemplary patience, until my forthcoming volumes were sur-

misled in an evening paper to be the work of "a noble lord distinguished for his oratorical displays," a statement which startled me very much, and sent me off in a towering passion to my publisher, who very coolly informed me that all these preliminary puffs were good for the sale of my work. As I had sold my manuscripts to Mr. —, I had no interest in the fraud he was practising, and on this account it suddenly occurred to me that I had no right to interfere with his arrangements, as the book was his, and he had the legitimate power to do whatever he pleased with it. So I said to him, "And pray Mr. —, how much do these paragraphs cost you?"

"Half-a-guinea a-piece," replied the bookseller, "and it's money well laid out."

"And how many copies of a book do you think each puff enables you to sell?"

"I cannot calculate; but without advertising we should not sell a single copy."

"Well, then, advertise to your heart's content; but oblige me, Sir, by not departing from the truth in these preliminary flourishes. I cannot bear it, I cannot indeed, to see my volumes surmised to be the work of "a noble and eloquent lord," and to know all the time that the surmise emanates from your back parlour. I give you my honour, Mr. —, that if you advertise any more false reports, I'll contradict them flatly in the papers."

"It's the common way of doing business," replied the publisher; "we should do nothing without first of all awakening the curiosity of the town. I assure you, Sir, that all the first authors of the day have submitted to this in turn. I can assure you, Sir——"

But I was not to be assured; and my choler was abundantly excited by the extreme coolness of the man of books. "Look you, Sir," said I in a loud voice,— "if you are not satisfied with your bargain, I am willing to refund the money you have paid me." (This I could not have done if the bookseller had taken me at my word.) "I tell you, Sir, that I will not be the means of enabling you to practise a fraud upon the public. Issue as many false reports as you please,—say that my volumes are the work of an earl, a duke, an archbishop, what you will,—say that they have been committed to the flames on account of their extreme pungency,—say that you have been offered three thousand pounds to suppress my harmless manuscripts,—say anything you please, Mr. ——, but, by Jupiter, I will contradict what you say." And having said this, I bounced out of the room, Mr. —— calling after me, "Well, Sir—I was doing this for your good; but have your own way, young gentleman, have your own way."

And I did have my own way. I wish certain

authors, that I could name, would act as I acted upon this occasion.

From the house of my publisher I went direct to the printing-office, where they gave me the last proof of my last volume, and asked me for the preface and dedication. The "reader," as he is called, of this establishment, was a shrewd, sensible, well-informed man, who had received an excellent education, and had once been in better circumstances. This individual was of considerable service to me, for he suggested many emendations as my work passed through the press, and there was a great deal of subtlety, and sometimes of profoundness, in his criticisms. He was well acquainted with all the goings-on of the Literary world, and he told me very many things 'undreamt of in my philosophy.' One day I was alluding in his presence to the probable reception my work would meet with from the different critical publications; and I was very much astonished by his exclaiming, without the least hesitation,—“Oh! you will be plastered (praised) in the * * *, slightly abused in the * * *, and utterly *squashed* in the * * *. D—— will damn you with faint praise; B—— say what he thinks of you, and J—— will lay on his praises inch-deep with a trowel.” I was very much astonished at this, and with a smile of incredulity, I replied

"But how on earth do you know this before the books are sent to them for review."

"Oh! they review booksellers, not books," said the reader.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh! simply this—one review, perhaps, is our own property, and of course our own review speaks well of our own books; then we have a share in another, and with a third we advertise largely; a fourth is the rival of our review, and therefore it abuses our books; a fifth is conducted by a gentleman, whose manuscripts we have several times refused; with a sixth we do not advertise—a most unpardonable offence—and so on; in this manner I might run through the whole list of periodicals, and show how each one is affected by and towards our establishment. But, I have said enough of this, Mr. Doveton. "To whom do you dedicate your book?"

"Oh! to Mr. Anstruther—certainly to Mr. Anstruther," I exclaimed. "Give me a pen;" and I wrote, "To Edwin Anstruther, Esq., of Charlton Abbey, these volumes," &c. &c., with all the usual formulæ of a dedication.

"And so Mr. Anstruther is a friend of yours, Sir?" said the 'reader,' as he glanced at my dedication.

"Indeed he is, and the best of friends; and do you know him too?"

" I once knew him very well," said the ' reader.'

" And how long is it since you were acquainted with him ?" I asked, endeavouring, with all my might, to appear as little concerned as possible.

" I knew him sixteen years ago : he then held an appointment under the vice-regent, in Ireland. He was regarded in the political world as one of the most rising young men of the day. He had great talents, and he was very rich. I was his private secretary and librarian."

" His private secretary ?"

" Yes ; for though he was only a secretary, he required very much assistance. Not that the duties of his office were very arduous, but that his mind was remarkably active ; and Mr. Anstruther was constantly engaged upon some literary undertaking or other. His secret influence was very great ; and the government, which he served, regarded him as one of their most useful supporters. He was one of the most admired writers in the — Review ; and he is the author of several works, which it would be a breach of confidence in me to name, Mr. Doveton."

" He had a wife ?"

" He had, sir ; and she was—oh, so beautiful !—The loveliest creature I have ever seen upon the face of the earth was Mrs. Anstruther."

" And she had children ?"

" She had, sir ; *three*—two boys and a girl."

“And now they are all dead,” said I; “the mother, and the three children?”

“Yes,” said the ex-secretary; “all dead. — They were drowned on their passage to England; the mother, and her three children.”

“This must have been a severe blow to Mr. Anstruther?”

“It was, indeed. He resigned his office, accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and immediately quitted the country. He remained abroad several years: some said that he had gone mad; others, that he had died of the plague at Constantinople; his family were beginning to dispute about his property; when suddenly he re-appeared in England, took possession again of Charlton Abbey, and there, to the best of my knowledge, he has been residing ever since. I have not seen him, but I have heard that he is indeed sadly altered — quite a wreck of his former self.”

“He is in wretched spirits,” said I; — “but, tell me, what age were his children?”

“The eldest, as far as I can remember, would have been about nineteen, had he lived; the next, a boy, was a year younger; and the girl, a year younger than him.”

“Ha! — Now tell me, Mr. Wilson, did you ever know one General Kirby — or Colonel Kirby, rather? — did you ever see him at the house of Mr. Anstruther?”

“ I do not remember the name. I think that I can say, certainly, he was never at Mr. Anstruther’s table whilst I dwelt in his house.”

“ Well, Mr. Wilson, you will look to the dedication;—it requires some taste to spread out a dedication well. Let some part of it be in old English characters, and let me see it before you go to press.” And having said this, I quitted the printing-office, reflecting upon the history of Mr. Anstruther.

c. CHAPTER XIII.

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW.

Busy opinion!—will you bow to that?—
 A thing which takes all forms, a mountebank,
 A very Proteus, acting now contempt,
 Now charity, now wearing a dark robe
 Of cruellest injustice; yesterday
 Opinion ranked you with the gods; to-morrow
 You will be styled a worm——
 Trust me, to *be* is better than to seem :
 Be wise and fear not.

MS.

My book came out in the middle of July—not too late, as my publisher told me, for London purchasers, and just in the right season for the watering-place libraries, — without the assistance of which, novel-writing would be a most unprofitable occupation; — and therefore I had taken the tide, which leads on to fortune, at the flood. My friend Smith was at this time in London; for he was paying a round of visits to his metropolitan friends.

I well remember one Saturday—the first after the appearance of my book,—that I had asked Smith to dine with me at an hotel, for I had determined to sleep that night in London, as I was going, I believe, to the Opera. Smith came at the appointed hour, and found me striding up and down the room, to all appearance in a violent passion. “And what is the matter now?” asked Smith.

“The matter!—just look at that paper;—do they call that criticism? Some confounded paltry hireling, who would traduce his own father for sixpence, has fallen foul of my book with all the abusive epithets he can muster. Criticism!—do they call that criticism? Now, I give you my honour, Smith, that there is not a word of truth in what he says.”

“Of course not.”

“He has garbled all the passages that he has quoted—distorted all my meanings—called my characters by their wrong names—represented them doing things which I have never made them do—and altogether mistaken, wilfully I think, the tendency of my unfortunate work. The fellow says that it is mischievous, when I positively declared that every page exhibits a yearning after the good of my fellow creatures—in short, it is full of philanthropy; and yet this malicious critic says that I am an enemy to mankind.”

“But my good fellow,” returned Smith, “your

book is none the worse for that creature's abuse. It is not a bit the more a failure for his asserting that it is one. There is your book, it is either good or bad in itself; let the critics say of it what they will, they can neither improve its deformities, if it be bad, nor impair its excellences, if it be good. Never mind what they say of it—for they cannot affect the real merits of the work."

"All that may be very fine," said I; "but I remember reading in one of the plays of my father's favourite, Marston, a passage, which says,

' — all that exists
Takes valuation from opinion.'

and Shakspeare, a better authority still, declares that 'there's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.' And Epictetus too—

"Oh! I know all that," interrupted John Smith; "but a published work is public property; and if you appear on the stage you must prepare to be hissed now and then. I have read your book, and to speak candidly, I think that there is more genius in it than there is in the majority of fictions. Never mind what that fellow says; if I mistake not, he is one of those, who, the printer said, would abuse you."

"He is—but remember, Smith, that the public take their opinions from the *dicta* of these reviewers."

“ Oh ! but he is only one of a number—”

“ And yet it is a hard thing,” said I, “ to be cut to pieces in one’s first review.”

“ Not at all—it’s the best thing that could happen—it will harden you ; besides, it will give you a greater zest for more favourable criticisms. Let us try ;”—and Smith took from his pocket another weekly literary paper—“ there now, read that, and you will say that I am a good Samaritan thus to pour oil into your wounds.”

“ Oh ! give it to me—where did you get it ? does this speak well of my work ?”

“ Judge for yourself ; I called at the office, on my way hither, and I read the review of your book as I came along the street.”

I read—and to my infinite delight, I found that this reviewer had lauded me even more than the other had abused me. All the most flattering phrases in the critical vocabulary had been called into service to adulate my work. All the epithets made use of in this criticism were, indeed, the diametrical opposites of those employed in the former review. It was just as though somebody had made a list of *errata* thus ; for *bad* read *good* ; for *feeble* read *powerful* ; for *shallow* read *profound* ; for *coarse phraseology and over-wrought sentiment*, read *grace of diction and subtlety of thought*. Now as I was at that time one of the uninitiated, I was rather startled by these incongruities ; and I

did not find it *very* easy to form a true estimate of my work from the opinions of these antagonist reviewers. "Now," said Smith, "if you were to believe all that the critics say of you, in what a pretty predicament you would be. Your work is a complete triumph; and yet it is a miserable failure. You are a man of genius, an original thinker, a poet, a philosopher, and a philanthropist, yet, nevertheless, you are a shallow coxcomb, a servile copyist, an impotent trifler, and a spiteful coward. Now, I appeal to you, Doveton, is it possible to be all these things at the same time? No, no; my friend, you must not suffer yourself either to be elated or depressed by criticism. Put these two reviews together, the soda of the one neutralizes the acid of the other; and now, my good fellow, to dinner with what appetite you may."

"And a very good one I have too," said I.

But anxious as I was to follow Smith's advice I did not find it a very easy thing to render myself indifferent to criticism. However, "the ayes had it," and almost the whole periodical press was pleased to speak favourably of my work. My publisher told me that I was "selling;" but my success was not remarkably brilliant, until a most elaborate and highly complimentary review of my book appeared in one of our great quarterly publications; and from that hour I was "a made man," and I walked proudly, albeit unknown, amongst

my literary *collaborateurs*.^{*} That Anstruther was the writer of this critique I had very little doubt of at the time; or if he had not written it himself, he had, at all events, caused it to be written. How I loved the man—how full, how over-brimming was the chalice of my heart with gratitude!

I wrote to him, and my letter contained the most exaggerated expressions of thankfulness, mingled with assurances of my devoted affection. I wrote to him, and again I urged the question, hitherto unanswered, concerning his acquaintance with the Kirbys. It was the darling wish of my soul to prove that Michael and Ella Moore were the children of well-born parents. We all know how easy it is to believe that which we desire very much; and it is a truth, that even at this period I entertained a suspicion, almost amounting to a conviction, that Michael and Ella Moore were the children of Mr. Anstruther. Now, the only connecting link which associated the cottage children of Grass-hill with the proprietor of Charlton Abbey, was, as perhaps the reader remembers, the little volume of Erasmus' Colloquies, with which Mrs. Moore had presented me. In the absence of any more substantial proofs, I had been very willing to grasp at shadows; and it signified very little to me that Mr. Anstruther had himself told me that all his children were dead, and that Mr. Wilson who was once his secretary, had distinctly ac-

quainted me with the manner of their death. But these, indeed, were barriers, which my imagination easily overleapt; and, I fully believe, that, had Anstruther been a bachelor, I should have been equally convinced that Michael Moore was the heir to his estates. Indeed, as a very strong proof that our wishes are oft the "fathers of our thoughts," I positively declare, that in all these speculations, I never once thought of Lawrence, nor did it ever occur to me for a moment, that *he* was the son of Mr. Anstruther, although I well knew that my patron had been blessed with three children, two boys and a girl; and it was but reasonable to suppose that if Michael and Ella belonged to him, Lawrence must have been in a similar position; but when once a man gives the rein to his imagination, there is no making any calculation as to the strange places into which it will carry him.

Besides, I was well acquainted with the whole history of the Moores. All the doubt and uncertainty, which once enveloped the story of their lives, had been cleared away by the narration of my uncle Pemberton, and I was now fully able to account both for the learning and accomplishments of Mrs. Moore, and for the grace and refinement of her children; a common mind would have been satisfied with this discovery; but I was always building castles in the air, and as my ima-

gination was peculiarly creative, it did not stand in need of much circumstantial evidence to bear upon any case that I was anxious to make out, for where a real basis was wanting, a fictitious one was very speedily established, and I could build up just as towering a structure upon an imaginary as upon an actual foundation. Oh ! indeed there is no architect in the world, who can bear a comparison with fancy.

And Mr. Anstruther replied to my letter. He had never been acquainted with Colonel Kirby ; he thought that he had heard his name mentioned, but he was positive that he had never been introduced to him.

Then Mr. Anstruther, having answered my query, besought me earnestly to pay him a visit. " Oh ! " said he, " since the publication of your book, more than ever have I desired to know you better."

There was no resisting this invitation, so I wrote to Anstruther, fixing a day upon which I promised to appear at Charlton Abbey. " Now," thought I, " if he be the father of my friends, it will be strange, if in a very few months, I do not restore his lost children to his arms."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRAINED HORSES.

“ Who happier for the moment—who more blithe
Than that fallen spirit? In those dreary holds
His talents lending to exalt the freaks
Of merry-making beggars, now enchained
With mute astonishment themselves to see
In their own art undone.”

WORDSWORTH.

It was the first day of October, and my cousin Emily said to me at breakfast, “ Gerard dear. Croydon fair begins to-morrow.”

My uncle smiled and said, “ Emmy, how came you to think of that ?”

“ Oh ! papa, I remember that when I was a very little girl I once went there with you ; besides, I saw a number of carts and caravans passing yesterday, and one of the servants reminded me that to-morrow is the first day of the fair.”

“ Shall you go ? ” said I, addressing myself to Mr. Pemberton.

My uncle, still smiling, replied, “ No, Gerard, I do not quite think that it would be a fit place for the Rector of * * * . ”

“ Do you think that it is wrong, uncle, to visit these places of public amusement ? ”

“ Why,” said my uncle, “ if I were to go there, I do not suppose that in my own person I should commit much wrong. But that many evil things are done every year at Croydon Fair is undeniable. In a large assembly of this kind there must be a mixture of good and bad people. That the good preponderate there is very little doubt, but still some wicked persons must be there, for if any be in the neighbourhood, they are sure to frequent the place, where the greatest number of individuals are assembled. I do not think that these fairs are advantageous to the morals of society, for there the vicious exercise their vices, the weak, perhaps, become vicious, and — but, my dear Gerard, I am indulging in a vein of common-place, which you, I know well enough, abhor above all things in the world. You may go to the fair, and I think with impunity, for you are neither vicious nor weak; and so might I, Gerard, but that thereby, perhaps, I might bring my calling into disrepute, and many of my parishioners, who would recognize me, might consider me less

worthy to be their oracle, if they beheld me jostling through a crowd of ostlers, nursery-maids and Addiscombe cadets. And, therefore, my dear boy, I do not think that I shall go to the fair."

"I think that *I* shall though, uncle."

"I see no reason why you should not, if you anticipate any pleasure from the recreation."

"Yes, uncle, I have determined to go — and I shall visit every booth of jugglers, players, and equestrians in the fair."

"What a funny man you are," said my cousin Emily, "I should not have thought with your refined tastes that you could have any relish for such amusements."

"Nor have I, Emmy," said I.

"Then why go?"

"I think that I told you the story of Lawrence Moore — of how he deserted his home, and joined — at least so thinks his mother — a company of strolling equestrians. Now it is possible that I may discover the lost one performing to-morrow at the fair, and having discovered I may reclaim him. Now tell me, uncle, do you not think that I ought to go to Croydon to-morrow?"

"Why I think, Gerard," replied my uncle, with a smile of commendation upon his face, "that with such a motive as this you might go to the fair as safely as to church — indeed, my dear boy, I do."

"May I take Emmy with me?" said I, encouraged by the commendations of my uncle.

But before Mr. Pemberton could reply, my cousin Emily exclaimed, "No, Gerard, I will not go with you."

"Why not, love?"

"My dear Gerard, I would willingly go any where with you, for I know that you would never take me to any place where I ought not to go. But I shall be sadly in your way. If you were only visiting the fair for amusement's sake, with papa's sanction I would accompany you; but as you are going upon a journey of discovery, I think that you had better go alone. You may, perhaps, have to follow up a pursuit, and then what a clog I shall be to your movements. No, Gerard, go alone, and I will stay at home and pray for your success."

"Emmy, love, you are quite right," said my uncle, "I did not think that you were half so discreet."

"Oh! uncle, give it some better name than discretion," I exclaimed, smiling fondly upon my cousin. "I think that if Emmy could render me a great service, were it necessary, she would whistle her discretion to the wind."

And so to the fair I went. It was precisely like all other fairs, and needs no particular description. There was the usual complement to be seen of

ginger-bread and wall-nuts (now just in season)—toys, round-about, and hot sausages. There was the wonted motley congregation of ladies, and nursery-maids with their children, Addiscombe cadets in plain clothes trying to look knowing, dirty boys begging for scrambles, and pick-pockets in top boots. There was of course plenty of amusement for such buoyant spirits as came to the fair for the mere purpose of enjoying themselves—merry-go-rounds, prick-the-garters, wheels of fortune, and shy-sticks every where—dwarfs, giantesses and sea-serpents, with their portraits outside their domiciles—and lastly, conspicuous for their magnitude, those emporiums of fun and frolic, the travelling theatres of Messers Richardson and Gyngel, and—oh! how I rejoiced to behold it there—the equestrian circus of the renowned Mr. Centaur!

I had not forgotten my fearful conflict with the dread manager of this equestrian troop, who, like the hybrid animal, whose name he bore, was, indeed, more a beast than a man. But I was determined, even at the risk of another personal engagement, to prosecute my search after Lawrence Moore; and thinking of my beloved Ella, I cast out all fear from my nature, and I felt that I had courage and strength.

I entered the booth, paid my shilling, and took a

seat on one of the front benches as near to the circus as possible. The arena was unoccupied, for the performance had not yet commenced. I was glad of this; for I said to myself, "I must preconcert a plan of operation, before I venture to act;" and then I began to cast about in my mind how it would best become me to conduct myself in the event of my ascertaining the fact of Larry's association with the players.

Determined as I was to throw aside all selfishness, and at any risk to reclaim the brother of my sweet Ella, I must, nevertheless, acknowledge that I recoiled from the thought of revealing myself to Lawrence Moore, and of taking part in the scene which would inevitably follow, before such a motley assemblage of disreputable people as I now beheld around me in the booth. "No," thought I, "for both our sakes it had better be done in private."

And as I was still pondering, my next neighbour, a middle-aged, respectably-dressed man, with a plain but very expressive face, and a strange twinkle in his eyes, said to me in a low and rather pleasing voice, "Have you ever attended this circus before, Sir?"

"Never," I replied, "Sir; have you?"

"Often," said my neighbour, — his eyes twinkling so strangely that I almost thought he was

crazed, — “Often, sir — and in divers places during the last year — I may say, sir, that in at least six or seven different localities, I have been present at the equestrian performances of Mr. Centaur’s celebrated troop. Some people call it a company, sir, which is evidently a misapplication — a *troop* of equestrians, but a *company* of players, just as in the army they say ‘a troop of horse,’ but ‘a company of foot.’ I dislike very much, sir, to hear things called by their improper names.”

I said to myself, “Of a certainty this fellow is somewhat crazed.” But it occurred to me at the same time that he might be of service, so I said to him, “But are you not almost tired of seeing the same performances so often?”

“Not at all,” replied my neighbour. “I do not think that I should ever be tired. — It is true that there are a number of fellows here, calling themselves Austrian Herculeses, and American Phenomenons, and of these I am heartily sick — but there are two young performers here, sir, a boy and a girl, whom I would walk barefoot any distance to see.”

“Ah!” — I exclaimed; and then I eagerly asked, “And pray, sir, what may be their names?”

“They call the youth, sir — Signor Laurentio, and the little girl Mademoiselle Beau-pied; but it strikes me that they are both English, and brother

and sister if I mistake not — they have a way, sir, in these troops of giving people strange names; now *Beau-pied* means ‘beautiful foot’ in French, and Laurentio is only the Italian of *Lawrence*.”

As the stranger mentioned the name of *Lawrence*, my heart beat very quick, “Oh! he is here; he must be here,” thought I, “and he is the Signor Laurentio.” It was possible; but in my mind a possibility was soon magnified into a certainty; and I now felt that I was quite sure of soon beholding the lost brother of my beautiful Ella.

But I continued to converse with my neighbour, and I began with an ill-assumed appearance of indifference to ask him a multitude of questions: What age was the youth — what was his aspect — what the colour of his hair — what his height — what his figure? To all of which interrogatories I received answers, which, when put together, made an exact description of my friend Larry Moore.

“But what makes you think,” said I, “that the youth and the little girl are brother and sister?”

“Oh! because he looks so fondly always on the little maiden, and appears to watch her with the utmost anxiety as though he were fearful lest she should hurt herself. And then, sir, they are both so graceful — there is so much harmony in their motions, if I may so express myself, assorting the one with the other so admirably, sir, that it

"would be difficult to persuade one's-self, that such an exquisite co-operating sympathy could exist between any but brother and sister. I fear, sir, I am too technical; but I have studied these things professionally; I was a professor of Poetical Attitudinarianism, though I have now retired upon my fortune."

"In other words a posture-master," said I.

"In the language of the vulgar a posture-master," said my neighbour, his little eyes twinkling more than ever, "the intellectual importance of our profession has never yet been duly estimated. We are the mind, sir, to the sculptors hand. We devise, but the sculptor executes; our art, sir, is above sculpture."

"Undoubtedly," said I, "and I think that now I can enter into your reasons for frequenting this circus so constantly. Grace, sir, is the natural aliment of your soul. You delight in all graceful things. You have a mind so attuned to the harmony of motion — the Poetry of Motion, I ought to say," and thus I went on, pouring out more fine words and more recondite nonsense than did Ephraim Jenkinson himself, when he got upon his account of the Cosmogony.

But the little posture-master in spite of his dislike to hearing terms misapplied, was very much delighted with my altisonant phraseology, thinking I supposed that it could not be *mis*-applied,

as it was all applied to himself. "You have a soul, sir; I see that you have a soul, sir," said he, "and I am sure that you will fully enjoy the intellectual treat that is preparing for you. You will presently be surfeited with grace — when Signor Laurentio and little Beau-pied appear as Zephyr and Aurora. You will have a hard trial to endure though previously, for a number of clumsy fellows begin with their sickening performances — graceless varlets — I should like to chastise them all — but here comes the manager."

And Mr. Centaur appeared in the circus with a foraging cap on his head, and a hussar-jacket upon his brawny shoulders. He carried a long driving whip in his hand, which ever and anon he smacked, making the saw-dust fly about, to the prejudice, as I thought, of my eyes. Then the clown entered, and turned a few semersets, and made a great number of ugly faces, and laughed at his own witticisms, which were almost co-eval with the breed of horses, and certainly with the breed of clowns. Then a number of men in strange dresses came in, and made a human pyramid, of which the Austrian Hercules was the base. Next came a horse, chalked and painted into a pie-bald, cantering into the circus without a rider, and when it had performed two or three circumambulations, the clown threw himself upon its back, sitting with his face towards the tail of the

animal, and making a number of grimaces, which the multitude seemed very much to enjoy. But presently entered the American Phenomenon ; and the clown, demurring not a little in his own quaint style, was soon unhorsed by the Trans-Atlantic equestrian, who now began to exhibit his "unrivalled agility" in what I thought a very clumsy manner. To him succeeded a painted lady upon an old roan horse, and they called her the "Nymph of the floating veil," because she held in her hand a large piece of stiff calicoe, which she twisted into a variety of shapes, none of them much more graceful than herself. And then a boy performed upon the slack-wire, and stood upon his head at the top of a pole ; and when this was over, a man in a blue jacket and straw hat played the part of a drunken sailor so naturally that I almost thought, barring his seamanship, that he was actually what he was trying to seem.

But now they begin to sweep the arena, and to scatter fresh saw-dust upon it. There is a pause, something great is expected ; my neighbour, the little posture-master, touches my elbow, and almost breathless, says to me, " Now, sir," — and the manager, with a smart application of the whip to the padded legs of the clown, cries " Can't you make way there for Signor Laurentio and Mademoiselle Beau-pied ;" whilst I, with a heart throbbing violently, turn my pale face towards the

entrance-door, and bend forward in an attitude indicative of extreme eagerness, my eyes almost bursting from their sockets.

They come!—On a snow-white steed, with a flowing mane, and long curving tail, stood a little girl about thirteen years of age, attired in white drapery, with a pair of delicate blue wings at her back, and a glittering tiara upon her head. Oh! never was there a human creature in the world more full of grace and beauty than this player child. Her little white spangled tunic descended scarcely to her knee, displaying the exquisite proportions of her round, tapering limbs; her arms were bare to the shoulder, and she held them aloft so gracefully, now in one attitude, and now in another, each quite a study for a painter; her little feet, which gained for her the title of Beau-pied, moving about all the while upon the flat surface of the saddle, whilst the well-trained animal which she rode ambled steadily round the circus, and appeared, indeed, to be mindful of the precious burthen which it bore.

And how lovely was the face of the little girl with its oval contour, its singular expressiveness, its delicate features, its lustrous eyes, and the long glossy nut-brown hair which descended from beneath the circlet on her head, and floated in rich clusters adown her back. Oh! too beautiful, and too graceful was she to be gazed at by the rude

multitude infesting a country fair. ' I could see at once that thus to be gazed at was an agony to her. The poor little thing trembled all over when first she appeared in the arena; I saw her look hurriedly around, and when she beheld the numbers assembled, she turned quite pale, and her countenance worked convulsively; and it was easy to see that the poor little creature was no less timid and sensitive than she was lovely and graceful. I knew her; this was the same pretty child that warried me against the cruelty of Mr Centaur.

Round and round the circus she rode, varying her graceful attitudes; she held a little wand in her hand, and having waved it thrice in circles above her head, another snow-white steed came bounding into the arena: and upon the animal's back stood a winged youth, with an azure tunic studded with silver; and a scarf of the same cerulean hue—a noble, gallant-looking youth, with dark clustering hair, and bright hazel eyes, and limbs, from which the muscles stood prominently out, but not so prominently as to give any harshness to the outline of a figure, which presented a beautiful, and somewhat rare combination of power and grace. Upholding in one hand a garland of flowers, whilst, with the other, he held the reins of his curvetting steed, he rode up to the little equestrian maiden, and, side by side, they cantered round the arena

together, the youth taking the inner circle, and bending his eyes on the fair child so fondly that it was not difficult to trace the feelings of affection and solicitude, with which he regarded his beautiful companion. And now they come close before me—gracefully winding their arms around each other; I might touch the hem of her garment—how beautiful she is!—and that noble youth—it must be—it is Lawrence Moore.

“Did not I tell you,” whispered the little posture-master, “that you would be almost surfeited with grace. I see that your inmost soul, Sir, is thrilling with beautiful emotions.—Can any thing be more exquisite?—Now look, Sir, see with what infinite grace he places that garland upon her head—and how she looks up into his face smilingly—can any thing surpass that attitude?—Look, now they intertwine their arms, he standing with one foot upon her saddle, and one foot upon his own—now he kneels to her; she bends down gracefully, and, taking the garland from her own brows, she places it upon the head of the youth; and now he starts up with a look of rapture upon his face, and again infolds her in his arms.—My dear Sir, I see, well enough, that you are too much excited to speak. I do not wonder in the least—I agree with you, it is quite overpowering.”

It was, indeed, a beautiful sight, but I was too much excited to enjoy it. What was to be done?

I beheld Larry Moore, and, beholding him, I thought of Ella, and of Michael, and their poor mother. I said to myself, "I must reclaim him—I must withdraw him from his vagrant life, and this must be his last performance in the Circus."—And with these thoughts was mixed up a desire of rescuing the little maiden, who rode beside him, from the toils and pains of a life, which I knew was abhorrent to her feelings; I thought that she was descended from gentle parentage, and that the player-people had stolen her for her extreme beauty, and that now she was a desolate child in the centre of a society from which her soul inwardly revolted. "Oh! yes" I thought, "I must reclaim Larry Moore, and rescue this poor little maiden."

But how was I to accomplish this? The youth, during the whole time of his performance never once lifted his eyes from his beautiful little companion. He appeared neither to think of himself nor of his spectators; his whole soul was with his childish associate. Round and round the circus they galloped, increasing their speed at every turn, the boy with one foot upon the maiden's saddle, and one arm encircling her waist. Time after time they passed close before me, but Lawrence raised not his eye from the face of the little girl; and once, as they bounded past me, a rose dropped at my very feet from the garland wreathing her brows. I raised it, and though it were an artificial flower,

I placed it within my vest, and I felt my heart throbbing against it. The boy, throughout all this time, had been describing the smaller circle; but suddenly they both reined in their horses, and, wheeling sharply round so as to reverse the way of their circumgrations, the youth took the outer ring of the circus, and brushed so closely before me that I might have laid my hand upon his horse's mane as he passed.

"Lawrence—Lawrence Moore!" I whispered, as he galloped past, but, perhaps, I was unheard. The head of the youth was turned from me, and I could not mark the appearance of his countenance; but not a muscle of his frame was moved. In a moment he was on the other side of the circus, and again I drew in my breath, as he neared me: "Lawrence Moore!" I whispered a second time, and my voice was louder and more distinct. "Lawrence Moore!"—and I knew that I was heard.

The youth trembled, and almost tottered. I thought that he would have fallen to the ground. He moved the foot that was on the saddle of his companion's steed, and withdrawing his arm from the little girl's waist, he stood erect with both feet upon his own saddle, his head only drooping a little. I saw that he had difficulty in supporting himself; so fearful of an accident, I resolved to say no more, but to wait patiently till the termination of the performances. But again he neared

me ; my eyes were fixed steadfastly upon him ; round he came, and bracing up his muscles, in one great effort to be firm, he turned his head towards the place whence the strange voice had proceeded, and his eyes rested upon the troubled countenance of Gerard Doveton—his friend.

This was too much for him. From his elevated position he quickly dropped into his saddle ; and his legs hanging listlessly down, and his head drooping, he looked as though all the functions of life had been suddenly suspended within him. The little girl, who rode beside him, became pale as a spectre, and, reining in her docile steed, she unhorsed herself with a graceful spring ; and, laying her hand upon the bridle of Lawrence's animal, she checked the progress of the obedient beast ; then she took one of the youth's hands between her own, and, looking up into his face, with an expression of tenderest solicitude, she said to him,—“ Oh ! what ails you ?—speak, I beseech you, a word.”

And she, who but a moment before, dreading the gaze of the crowd, dared scarcely uplift her eyes, now unmindful of the assembled multitude, gave full vent to her feelings, and both spoke and acted, as though she beheld in the arena no other being beside Lawrence Moore.

“ What ails you ?” asked the little girl, looking anxiously into Larry's pale face, her own being still paler than her companion's.

"I am ill, very ill," gasped Lawrence; and when he had said this, he slid from his saddle and staggered out of the circus; little Beaupied followed in his foot-steps.

And then others appeared upon the arena, throwing themselves into ungainly postures — a number of graceless tumblers — but the multitude were equally well pleased, and Lawrence Moore was speedily forgotten by all but the little posture-master and myself.

I arose and quitted my seat; but as the benches were well filled, some minutes elapsed before I had gained the outer platform of the booth; and when I had descended the steps and felt the turf beneath my feet, I discovered, to my great annoyance, that the crowd around the temporary theatre was so dense, that I could not jostle through it with all the rapidity that I wished. But it frequently happens, that out of apparent evil proceedeth much real good; and it is certain that, upon the present occasion, the delay, which I experienced, enabled me to mature my schemes; for as I was elbowing my way through the crowd, desiring with all possible speed to gain the private entrance, at the back of the booth, that I might immediately have an interview with Larry Moore, it occurred to me that I might gain admission to the private quarters of the equestrians, by representing myself as a young medical man, and of-

offering my services to the invalid. This I did — but to my infinite mortification I discovered, when I had entered the tiring-room of the players, that “Signor Laurentio” had suddenly disappeared, and all the information concerning him, that I could gain, was that he had thrown a great cloak over his shoulders and rushed out of the booth. One of his associates had attempted to follow him, but the fugitive was soon lost in the crowd.

I then inquired after little Mademoiselle Beaupied, and I was told that she was in the women’s apartment. “Could I see her?” The players stared at me, and replied that the “thing was impossible.” But I was not thus easily to be deterred, and seeing a door close beside me, I resolved to enter, having made up my mind that it communicated with the apartment of the females.

So, without uttering another word, I pushed open this door ; and I found myself in the presence of several hundred spectators — making “my first appearance in the circus.”

“You have mistaken your way out, Sir,” said one of the equestrians in waiting.

“I have,” said I ; and stung by a sense of the ridiculous position in which I stood, I hastily quitted the booth, for it was very evident that as I did not know my way to the women’s apartment, I could not well force an entrance into it.

So I took my station, like a sentinel at the

back-entrance of the booth ; but hour after hour passed away, and still Larry Moore returned not. Evening closed in and night succeeded, but the fugitive did not re-appear. At length, weary of my vigils, and fearful lest my good uncle and my cousin Emily should be made anxious by my protracted absence, I resolved to return home.

But on the morrow I again visited the fair, and I was informed by one of the equestrians that "Signor Laurentio" had returned to the booth in the dead of night, and whilst the whole company were asleep he had possessed himself of all his private property, and again absconded, taking with him little Mademoiselle Beaupied.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STUDIO.

“ Books are there
Pictures and casts from all those statues fair,
Which are twin-born with poetry.”

SHELLEY.

AND now the period had arrived of my promised visit to Charlton Abbey ; and it was, indeed, with no ordinary emotions that I set out for the residence of Mr. Anstruther. I was about, in a few hours, to become the guest of this mysterious but generous-hearted man ; and anticipating my second interview with the strange being, whom I had first met under such extraordinary circumstances, I looked forward to the event with min-

gled eagerness, and trepidation. I scarcely knew whether I desired, or whether I dreaded the approaching interview.

I am often a prey to nervous excitement; but never upon great occasions. The anticipation of a most trivial event, such as a visit to a stranger, or perhaps, to a friend, a journey, a party, or the receipt of a letter, has often thrown me into a state of uneasiness, almost amounting to distress; but in the presence of any real danger, however embarrassing the situation may be, I am wont to be remarkably collected, and have more than once, in a most critical position, exhibited great presence of mind. My nerves seem to gain strength in proportion to the magnitude of the occasion. I suppose that this is what certain writers call "the triumph of mind over matter." — Moral power casting aside the disadvantages of physical debility. I state the fact with no desire to derive therefrom any inference favourable to myself; but in some measure to account for certain apparent inconsistencies in the attempted developement of my character. I never suffered so much from nervous excitement, as I did during my journey to Charlton Abbey; throughout the whole time, I was in a most painful state of tremulous uneasiness; and whenever I attempted to speak, my voice faltered so much, that my words were almost inarticulate, and I scarcely had the power to answer

the simplest question that was put to me by a fellow-passenger.

But at length the mail set me down at M——, where I found one of Mr. Anstruther's carriages waiting to convey me to the Abbey. My nervousness increased as I approached the end of my journey, and as I entered the park-gates, and beheld the stately mansion of my mysterious friend through a vista of fine old trees, my fear and trembling had arrived at such an alarming pitch, that I had good reason to anticipate the catastrophe of a nervous fever. Anstruther was certainly a mysterious being, and my imagination was, beyond all doubt, a very powerful magnifying medium.

But, when I beheld Mr. Anstruther, standing upon the steps, which conducted to the principal entrance of his mansion, and marked the smile of welcome upon his face, all fear forsook me suddenly; love and gratitude took possession of my whole soul, and I had no other desire but to rush into the arms of my patron, and to pour out the full measure of my thankfulness.

And there he stood, bare-headed upon the doorstep, a beautiful smile over-spreading the habitual melancholy of his face, like a ray of sunshine, entering a sepulchre. There he stood, looking towards the carriage, as it approached, and when the vehicle drew up, he came forward, exclaiming

“Welcome, most welcome, to the Abbey;” and, with his own hand throwing open the door, and letting down the steps of the chariot, in a moment he had clasped me in his arms.

Then, still grasping my hand, he conducted me to his study; and when we were alone, he again fervently embraced me. “My kind, generous-hearted boy,” he exclaimed, “how overjoyed I am to see you.”

“And I—,” was all that I could utter.

“Oh! yes,” continued Anstruther, “for fifteen years I have not been so happy as at this moment. I love you, I do indeed, almost as though you were my son. Albeit, for scarcely half an hour, in your life, you have been in my presence, Gerard, I know you full as well as if you had lived with me all your days, for I have often communed with your mind, and methinks I have not been studying your character altogether in vain. With one noble example of your actions to guide me, and many written illustrations of the high tone of your thoughts, and feelings, I think that I have been able, my dear boy, to form a correct estimate of your character, and certain am I, that I shall never find myself mistaken. Your letters, and above all your book, are the very mirrors of your mind. I know it, for that one generous action which has been the happy cause of our alliance, Gerard, is a strong confirmation that your deeds

do not belie the nobility of your thoughts. Oh ! I want words to tell you how glad I am to have you with me. And you will dwell here, you will not leave me too soon. You will be to me, I am sure you will—a son.”

I could only utter, echo-like, “a son ;” for my heart was exceeding full. Even little acts of kindness, overcome me ; but such great kindness as this !— Oh ! I have not words to tell what I felt.

“A son—yes ; you know that I am childless ;” and large tears rolled down his cheeks, as he spoke. “I have none to bless me. I am the last of my race. I am a poor, bereaved, desolate being. No, no, not desolate now, for thou wilt be to me a son, and I will love you as a father.”

“Yes, a son—a servant—every thing.”

“And you will dwell with me ?”

“Oh ! yes ; too happy to move about in your presence.”

“Bless you !—oh, you are very kind !—but you look pale and exhausted. The journey has been too much for you, or perhaps you are unwell. You shall drink some wine ;” and he rang the bell.

“You will be better when you have slept ; and yet I think that you are stouter than you were. This place is considered very healthy, and we will ride out every day. I believe that one’s horse is one’s best physician ; and we will visit all the

country round about. There are some sweet spots in the neighbourhood. To-morrow, if the weather be fine, we will go the circuit of the Park; on Thursday, we will ride to M——;” and thus he went on, making plans for the whole week; and when he had done, he pressed me affectionately by the hand, and bending his eyes on me, whilst a sweet smile played upon his face, he added, in a joyous tone of voice, — “And we will be so happy!”

“Yes, so happy; and we will love one another.”

“We will; and live a pleasant life.—Ah! here is wine: it will refresh you to drink; and I, too, must drink your health, and ‘welcome to Charlton Abbey.’”

The wine did me much good; for my throat was painfully dry, and I was exhausted almost to faintness. When I had drunk, I immediately felt that I had gained a vast access of strength; I was calmer too, and better able to converse: the first excitement of our meeting was over. Anstruther perceived the change, and he said, “Ah! now you are better,—you have a little colour upon your cheeks,---but, before, you were very pale. I think that, when you have washed and dressed yourself, you will feel quite well: cold water is a great restorer. Should you like to be shown to your apartments?”

I signified my assent, and Anstruther rang the

bell. "Send Guido hither," said he to the servant who answered the summons.

And presently Guido appeared,—a pretty boy about thirteen years of age, with a dark-eyed Italian countenance, and a fantastically picturesque dress. "This boy," said Mr. Anstruther, addressing himself to me, "little Guido, is your page. He will show the way to your apartments;—but, stay—I will come with you, and be my own lord chamberlain for once."

As he said this, Mr. Anstruther led the way, and having conducted me across a magnificent hall, we presently ascended a broad staircase of highly polished oak. Then passing along a lofty gallery, on either side of which hung a number of dusky portraits, we had soon reached the suite of rooms appropriated to me; and I found myself in the most beautiful chamber I had ever beheld in my life.

It was to be my study. "I have endeavoured," said Mr. Anstruther, "to prepare a room worthy to receive you. I am anxious that all surrounding objects should be in harmony with your own mind,—beautiful and graceful,—Gerard. If there be anything here offensive to you, give instant orders that it be removed; you are at liberty to alter and amend. I have arranged things here after what I have conceived to be the most becoming fashion, but I may have failed. My taste is not always to

be relied upon; and you, I know, my dear boy, have an exquisite perception of the beautiful. Therefore, I say, if there be anything here offensive to your taste, amend it;" and as he uttered these words, there was a playfulness in his manner, and an arch smile upon his face, the full meaning of which I knew very well how to interpret.

"Oh, beautiful! beautiful!" I exclaimed, surveying the apartment with intense admiration; "it is what I have been dreaming of for years."

"And how is it possible that I should have divined your dreams?" said Anstruther, the same arch smile still playing upon his handsome face.

"Oh, indeed! I have often pictured to myself an apartment resembling this,—an apartment full of beautiful things; and now, behold! I have entered in reality the very chamber I have so often visited in imagination."

"Then I have not failed."

"Failed!—oh! my kindest of friends! my more than father, how exquisite is all this!"

"I have endeavoured," returned Anstruther, "to arrange all these things according to your own directions."

"To my directions?"

"Yes, Gerard; for you yourself have described to me your *beau-ideal* of an apartment; and as you have described, so have I endeavoured to ren-

der it. You see—in this room, at ‘all events,—one proof of my having *studied your book*.”

“ Oh ! kind, good man !—and therè, indeed, is everything here that my imagination has pictured. How very little did I expect ever to behold my dreams thus magnificently realized !”

“ Do not praise me for what I have done,” returned Anstruther ; “ it is all selfishness on my part. I am trying to bribe you to remain with me. But now I will leave you to yourself,” continued my kind friend, as he moved towards the door of my chamber. “ When you come below again, I must take you into the library, that you may select books therefrom for these vacant cases ; as, when you described your sanctum, you did not give a detailed list of the books which you desired to adorn it.” And having said this, Mr. Anstruther quitted the chamber, and I was left alone with little Guido, the page.

“ Come hither, my pretty boy,” said I, as I flung myself upon a couch of velvet with cushions of worked satin.

Guido stood before me, and his fine lustrous eyes seemed to say, “ What servite shall I render you ?”

“ Sit down, Guido, on that ottoman. You are an Italian ;—do you understand English ?”

“ I am a Venetian,” replied the boy, in the lan-

guage of our own country ; “ but I have dwelt, since my childhood, in England.”

“ With Mr. Anstruther ?”

“ Yes. My father was his valet ; but now, sir, I am a poor orphan. I have neither parents, nor brother, nor sister, nor any relative, in the world.”

“ Be a good boy, Guido, and I will be to you a father, a brother, and a friend. Do you think, Guido, that you will ever be able to make up your mind to like me ?”

“ Oh ! yes, Sir, I have made up my mind already, for you speak in a very kind voice.”

“ Do you like your master ?”

“ *You*, Sir, are my master.”

“ But Mr. Anstruther — ”

“ Oh ! yes, he is very kind ; but sometimes I am almost frightened to be in the room with him alone. I have seen him look so strangely, and I have heard him sobbing like a child, as though his poor heart were bursting ; and I don't know what is the matter with him, for he has been in this way for years. Far back as ever I can remember, I have never seen him smile before to-day ; your coming, Sir, has altered the look of his face, the tones of his voice, and all about him. Oh ! indeed, it is sometimes quite terrible to watch —— ” but here I checked the prattle of the boy, for I thought that it did not become me to converse

with him upon such a theme as the character of his master.

So I changed the subject, for there was something that pleased me very much in this Italian boy; and I said to him, laughing as I spoke, "Has any body ever told you, Guido, that you are a very beautiful child?"

Guido blushed, and hanging down his head, replied, "Mr. Anstruther told me."

"And what did he say? now, don't be modest, but tell me what Mr. Anstruther said."

And the page, lifting up his dark eyes, replied, "When this room, Sir, was prepared for your reception, and all the pictures hung up, and the statues put upon their pedestals, Mr. Anstruther took me into it, and said, 'Don't you think, Guido, that this is a very beautiful room?'—And I said, 'The most beautiful room, Sir, I have ever beheld in my life;'—here the boy's voice faltered, a deep blush crimsoned his cheeks, and his head drooped again, overlaid with the weight of his modesty.

"Go on, Guido," said I, enjoying the distress of the boy.

"And Mr. Anstruther said to me, 'It is a beautiful room, and *therefore*, Guido, you shall have the charge of it.'"

"Oh! Guido," said I, laughing, "you have a quick ear to drink in a compliment."

"I did not understand it at first," replied the boy, "but when I thought over Mr. Anstruther's words, I could not mistake the meaning of the *therefore*."

"You were right, Guido," said I, starting up from my recumbent posture, — "but you must show me all the beauties of the room. Which is the chiefest?"

"*The view from the window.*"

"You are right, Guido, you are right; nature always before art. Beautiful and magnificent is the prospect; do you see that fine air-tint upon the distant hills? What think you the colour is like?"

"The bloom upon a plum," returned Guido.

"Oh! yes, the bloom upon a plum, before a human finger has touched it. I think, Guido, that it is even more beautiful than the *couleur de rose* of those window-curtains."

"I think so too, Sir," said Guido, thoughtfully.

"And what next, my pretty boy? what is the next beautiful thing to the prospect visible from the window?"

Guido hesitated, and looked around the room; "Yourself, Guido?" said I.

"Oh! no, Sir, that little girl in marble, done by my countryman, the great sculptor."

"Canova?"

"Yes, Mr. Anstruther told me, that I ought to be proud of Canova, the Venetian."

“ And so you ought, Guido ; how exquisitely graceful is the figure of this little girl ; this Psyche ; I know that it is Psyche, the bride of the boy Cupid. Well, Guido, what next ? ”

“ This picture of the woman with her doves ; I think that this also is the work of a Venetian.”

“ Nay, now you are partial to your fellow-countrymen.”

“ Look at the picture, Sir, and *then* judge. But is it not right to be proud of one’s countrymen ? ”

“ Yes, Guido, and you are right too. This painting is a Venus, by Titian ; and I think, next to the Psyche, the most beautiful creation in the room. Now, Guido, do you not think that you could spend your whole life in gazing upon such loveliness as this ? ”

“ I have heard,” said Guido, “ that my own country is the place to see beautiful sights.”

“ And yet I doubt, whether, in all Italy, there is such a dear little *sanctum* as this.”

Then I continued to survey the beauties of the apartment ; and, indeed, they were many and great. The general effect of the arrangements was taken, as Mr. Anstruther acknowledged, from a description in the second volume of my book, but the exquisite taste of my host was discernible in all the lesser details. All things were in beautiful harmony with one another, making one most consummate whole. Neither in form, nor colour, nor

disposition, was there aught in the chamber that could be offensive to the most exquisite refinement of sense. The pictures upon the walls were few, but they were gems by the first masters; and only two specimens of sculpture adorned the room; a Psyche, by Canova, and a Greek Shepherd Boy, by our own most classical Flaxman. I have often thought that to attempt a piece-meal description of an effect, the beauty of which consists in its unity, is an useless expenditure of labour; and therefore, I shall not endeavour to delineate in detail, the charms of my little Paradise in the Abbey.

But herein consisteth a striking advantage, which the painter's art possesseth over the poets.

"And this, Sir, is your writing-table," said little Guido; "as you sit there, Psyche appears to be just turning round to smile upon you."

"Do you know what Psyche is?" said I.

"A little girl, and I heard you say, 'the bride of the boy Cupid.'"

"True; but Psyche means *the soul*,—and I will tell you her history; 'tis a pretty fable, and not without meaning, my Guido. Psyche was a mortal maiden till Cupid grew enamoured of her, and then she became a divinity. Now, Psyche is the personification of the soul, and Cupid, as you know, Guido, is love; when love enters the soul it becomes etherialized,—it is no longer a thing "of earth,

earthly," but it is lifted up to heaven, and becomes divine. You have not forgotten your Italian, have you, Guido?

L'amore è per Dio lume supermo,
Scintilla dell' immortel fioco.

Ha! ha! my Lord Byron, you did not go to Italy for nothing:—

" Yes, love indeed is light from heaven,
A spark of that immortal fire,
By angels shared,"—

και τα λοιπα—but now, Guido, I must tell you, that Venus hated Psyche and destroyed her;*—now Venus,—but I have told you quite enough about these Gods and Goddesses, Guido,—by Apollo! how inviting is this chair; methinks I could sit here, and write from 'morn to dewy eve;'—and oh! what a beautiful ink-stand in the shape of a silver well,—ah! *the well of English undefiled*;—in this will I ever dip my pen,—and what hosts of materials for writing;—was ever a table more complete? Portfolios, note-books, most fantas-

* Venus signifies Lust, and Lust destroys the soul. There is always a very fine latent meaning in these mythological fables. Thus Cupid is the child of Venus; but by whom? Either by Jupiter, who is Dominion, or by Mars, who is Victory,—signifying that Love is sexual desire, rendered subservient to the dominion of mind.

tical pen-wipers,—and oh ! what a love of a paper-knife ! I declare that there is a quire of paper on the desk, with a pen lying temptingly by the side of it ! I will begin a book, and I will call it “Guido ;” there cannot be a prettier name. Vol. I. chapter the 1st ; but, Guido, what is that bell ?”

“The first dinner-bell.”

“Oh ! then I must dress ; but tell me, Guido, how comes it that there is no fire-place in the room, and yet it is not cold ?”

“A fire-place would have spoilt the room, Sir,—and, therefore, it is heated with warm air from without.”

“And yet I do not see the flues.”

“But you can see, Sir, those two bronze shields.”

“Right, Guido,—and now we will go and dress. We pass through this ante-room to my bed-chamber.”

“Yes, Sir, this is my waiting-room, and I sleep upon this couch ; I have only to touch a few springs, and I am supplied with all the furniture of a bed-room. Behind that picture is a closet containing my ward-robe,—and this, Sir, is your chamber.”

“And a dormitory fit for a prince.”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROGRESS OF PREJUDICE.

“ Ha ! ha !—forgive me, Sir,—
 I thought you were all candour, and that none
 Could tax you with injustice,—I esteemed you
 A very Aristides, but I find
 That Prejudice and Bigotry have made
 Their homes in your weak mind ;—I crave your pardon,
 But I misjudged you, and I’m sorry for it ”

Old Play.

WHEN I had dressed myself, little Guido conducted me into one of the drawing-rooms, for without his assistance I should infallibly have lost my way. There I found Mr. Anstruther lying upon a sofa, and perusing a book by the fire-light. Upon my entrance, he rose from his recumbent posture, and approaching me, said in a gay voice, “ Will the *sanctum* do for you, Gerard ? ”

"Oh ! Mr. Anstruther," I answered enthusiastically ; "I have been so delighted—so enraptured with it, that my tongue has been scarcely silent one moment since I entered that little Paradise of rooms. I do not know what I have said, but perhaps little Guido could tell you,—I have been talking all manner of 'fine madness,' and I do not think that I shall be able, for at least a week, to subside into every-dayishness."

"I see no reason," returned Mr. Anstruther, "why you should ever subside into it at all ; nor, indeed, do I think that you will. But, now tell me, Gerard, what are your favourite books ; for after dinner we will search for them in the library."

And I answered, without hesitation, "The Plays of Æschylus, the Dialogues of Plato, the Allegories of Apuleius, and the *De Rerum Naturâ* of Lucretius."

"These for your classics."

"Then the works of Lord Bacon, Sir Philip Sydney's *Arcadia*, all the writings of Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, and Robert South."

"It will not be difficult to find them,—but proceed."

"Some of the olden dramatists,—especially Beaumont and Fletcher,—the poems of Spenser, and of Herrick,—and—and—and the writings of *Erasmus*."

“I had no indirect meaning in uttering these last words,—no latent desire to awaken by my allusions any dormant remembrances in Anstruther’s mind. At that moment I was thinking of nothing but the extreme kindness of my friend ; I had forgotten the mystery of his character in the exceeding benevolence of his actions ; gratitude had absorbed every feeling of curiosity, and I had but one wish to prove myself worthy of the excessive kindness of my benefactor. Yet so it was that I had no sooner uttered these words, insignificant as they were in themselves, than I thought of Ella and Michael Moore, and of the little book their mother had given me. Then an impulse, which I could not resist, urged me to proceed further,—an impulse, springing from an impure source, for it neither arose out of reason, nor out of kindness, drove me onward in a headlong course ; and, fixing my eyes searchingly upon Anstruther as I spoke, I said, “What do you think of the *Erasmî Colloquia* ?”

This was merely an experiment ; and I could scarcely have expected that it would have been productive of any particular result. But I tried it ; and it did not fail. A cloud gathered upon Anstruther’s brow, and suddenly his large, deep eyes were suffused with glistening tears. The red light from the fire gleamed upon his face, and I could see, by the compression of his lips, that he

was endeavouring, with all the strength of his mind, to quell the rising emotions which had been awakened by my allusion to the *Erasmus*. And he succeeded: passing one of his hands hurriedly across his eyes, he brushed away the tears that were gathering there; and then he answered, in a voice which faltered slightly, yet so slightly, that, had I not been on the watch, I should have scarcely observed the trepidation,—“ Oh! I think, Gerard, that there is much quaint morality to be found in some of the dialogues,—a great deal of what may be called the philosophy of common sense.—But go on with your list, my dear boy; you have not mentioned any of the moderns.”

“ Let me think,” said I. “ Wordsworth, Shelley, and some of Hazlitt’s Critical Essays. Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*, and Mr. Carlyle’s translation of *Wilhelm Meister*. Charles Lamb’s *Essays of Elia*, and John Wilson’s *Isle of Palms*.”

“ I observe,” said Anstuther, “ that you have passed over in silence all the writers of Queen Anne’s time.”

“ I cannot bear them.”

“ What! not the *Spectator*—with Will Honeycombe, and Sir Roger de Coverly?”

“ No. I cannot tolerate the *wits*,—the very name of ‘a wit’ disgusts me. I do not like to read about Ramillies wigs and Mohocks: I might as well read Pepys’ Diary. There is an absence

of masculine energy in all the writings of that age ; they are all tinged with foppery, and I hate a fop worse than anything in nature. The greatest authors of that day were coffee-house literateurs ; they were all bucks and petits maitres ; dandified, perfumed writers of the black-patch-and-silver-buckle school. There is no high-toned feeling in their works, no grand principles, no lofty aspirations ; — all is low, petty, detailed, redolent of coffee-houses and sedan-chairs. There is no country freshness in them ; they all bear the stamp of a city. I do not insist that I am right ; but this is my genuine opinion ; and I never wish to increase my acquaintance with the *wits* of the Queen Anne's reign—*never*."

" I like your right-earnestness," replied Anstruther ; " short-comings and misgivings disgust me. I seldom am fortunate enough to hear a thorough-going, out-spoken opinion expressed on any subject whatever : but I should like much to hear what you think of the book I was studying when you entered."

" And what is it ?"

" *Tom Jones*."

" The history of histories," I exclaimed, " It has never been equalled, and never will be ;—*Gil Blas* is nothing beside it. I read *Tom Jones*, for the first time, when I was recovering from a severe illness : it did me more good than all the strength-

ening medicines: it was the finest tonic in the world. Who could ever think of being ill in the company of Thwackum and Square?—who in bad spirits, sitting beside Partridge, and listening to his criticisms on the play?—who——”

“Nay, now, Gerard!” interrupted Mr. Anstruther, smiling upon me as he spoke; “I have detected you in the commission of a palpable injustice. You withhold that praise from the original which you are willing to lavish upon its copy.”

“What original? what copy?” I asked.

“The original is No. 335, of the Spectator,—‘Sir Roger de Coverly at the Play;’—the copy is”—and he turned over the pages of the book, which he still held in his hand,—“the copy is the fifth chapter of the sixteenth book of *Tom Jones*, in which ‘Jones goes to a play with Mrs. Millar and Partridge.’ This is hardly fair, Gerard,—to extol the copy; and yet to censure the original. You may love Fielding better than Addison, but

‘Honour to whom honour is due;

and let justice direct all your criticisms, whether they be upon books or on men.”

“But do you not yourself love Fielding better than Addison?” said I.

“I confess, Gerard, that I do,” returned Anstruther. “For many years past, I have been a prey to the most miserable depression of spirits; and I have been obliged, to resort to an artificial stimu-

lant—to preserve me, I might almost say, from madness. I have tried many stimulants ; but the best that I have found, has been the study of certain choice comic works, which will stand the test of frequent re-perusal. At the head of my mental physicians, stand Fielding, and Smollet, and Scarron. Rabelais is too coarse for me : I cannot return to the History of Gargantua and Pantagruel with any anticipation of enjoyment. Ben Jonson I read with an uncommon degree of gusto ; and even Wycherly and Congreve I can tolerate : though the former is too courtly, and the latter too libertine, to afford me any very great delight. I will say nothing of Steele and Addison, because they are your favourite aversions. Cervantes and Le Sage,”—but here he was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, announcing dinner ; and breaking off suddenly, he added, “ But, after this ‘ feast of reason,’ let us proceed to one more substantial.” Then he passed his arm through mine, and together we entered the dining-room. “

CHAPTER XVII

THE PHYSICIAN AND HIS PATIENT.

" 'Twas perhaps an idle thought,
 But I imagined that if day by day
 I watched him, and but seldom went away,
 And studied all the beatings of his heart
 With zeal, as men study some stubborn art
 For their own good, and could by patience find
 An entrance to the caverns of his mind,
 I might reclaim him from his dark estate."

SHELLEY.

To study a man's character, is not always to comprehend it; and Anstruther was profoundly unintelligible. I loved him, because he was kind to me. I pitied him, because he was afflicted. I admired, because I beheld in him manifestations of a very superior intellect; but I did not *know* him; the intricacies of his nature were problems that I could not solve, because I had not for my *data* the events of his past life:

Yet I was not altogether in ignorance. I knew more than he suspected me of knowing; but still, not enough to enable me to read the secrets of his heart, and to account for the profundity of his sorrow. What! not enough? in one dreadful night to have lost all that was dearest to him—a young wife, and three innocent children, buried in one common tombless grave—the cemetery of the relentless ocean. Not enough, to account for his habitual despondency?—No, reader, *not* enough. There is no enduring sorrow, but that which is the offspring of remorse.

And nearly fifteen years had elapsed since the date of Anstruther's misfortunes. Time is a great physician; all-powerful is it to re-establish a broken spirit in its natural strength. But, what was time to Anstruther? Months and years passed away; but his anguish abated "not a jot."

Had he done evil? I scarcely suffered my mind to harbour such an uncharitable conjecture; and yet, if I had any knowledge of the human heart, his anguish was the anguish of remorse. But he was so mild, so kind-hearted; all his uttered thoughts bespoke so plainly a yearning after the good of his fellow-creatures; his dependents so loved him for his unceasing benevolence; and the conduct of his life accorded so strictly with the pure morality of the Redeemer, that indeed it

would have been difficult to have suspected him, of being other than the "best good man." None knew him, who did not love him. None knew him, who did not sorrow with him. His very servants sympathized with their master, and respected his grief, without profanely attempting to penetrate the mystery that shrouded it. As for myself, I loved him so entirely, that not even the discovery of a damning crime, clinging like a leprosy to his wretched soul, could have shaken the pillar of my affection.

Pity, gratitude, and admiration, made up the structure of my love. I pitied, oh ! very deeply, the sorrows that I could not comprehend : but, whilst I pitied, I tried to alleviate them, and in part my efforts were successful. It was plain that Anstruther loved me, and love itself is happiness, when we are conscious that it is not unreturned. He delighted in my companionship, and I suffered him rarely to be alone, for solitude is the aliment of melancholy. I endeavoured to divert his mind from all introspective meditations, conversing with him unceasingly upon matters of general interest, and scrupulously abstaining from any personal allusions. Literature, science, the fine arts, and sometimes politics, were the common subjects of our discourse ; and, indeed, I was more than repaid for my labours, in Anstruther's cause, by the beauty and profundity of his cri-

tiçisms. It was a pleasant thing, indeed, to hear him ; for his voice, was the sweetest I had ever listened to in any life, and his observations so luminous, and so original, that I had not conversed with him long, before I discovered that I knew actually nothing. In his presence I always stood self-acknowledged as an inferior being. I never attempted to compete with him ; but marvelled at the extent of his knowledge ; and whatever I ventured to advance, I advanced with the utmost diffidence. I had never thought so meanly, before, of my own powers. Once I imagined myself to be a giant ; but now, I knew that I was a dwarf. Before, I had been like Gulliver in Lilliput ; now, like the same worthy amongst the Brobdignags, a very little creature indeed.

Then, I would entice him abroad into the fields, and sometimes, I would persuade him to take a gun with him, for there was much game in the Charlton estate. At other times we would ride many miles from home, and, perhaps, sleep abroad for a night. Then, I would propose long walks, and divers little pleasant excursions ; and as we went along, I would talk all manner of wild nonsense—entering into the history of my school-boy days, and telling strange stories of my contemporaries. I would laugh and sing ; and be gay, and frolicsome ; hoping to impart a little of my mirth

to the sorrow-stricken soul of my companion. Then, a smile would light up his wan face; a smile, more of affection than of joy; and sometimes, but very seldom, he laughed out-right at my foolery; but it was not a gleesome, nor a natural laugh; it was an effort, rather than an impulse; he laughed, because he knew that I was kind, not because he felt that I was ludicrous.

— If the weather were unpropitious, and we were compelled to abide at home, I would drag Anstruther to the billiard table. He was a wretched player; and, if possible, I was worse; but I never regretted our unskilfulness, for it was to me, an abundant pretext for merry-making. I laughed at my own failures, and bantered Anstruther, whenever he missed a stroke that he ought to have made. We knocked about the balls; and Guido scored for us. The little fellow laughed at our clumsiness, and then I hit him across the back with my cue, always taking care not to hurt him in the least. And I would offer to bet all sorts of out-of-the-way things. “Rees’ Encyclopædia to a six-penny pamphlet.” “Shakspeare’s first folio to Mr. P—’s last farce.” “A Reubens to a signpost.” “A Canova to a doll;” or any thing equally absurd. The balls rattled; and I talked nonsense; and little Guido looked on with a countenance full of wonder and delight; and

Anstruther—played at billiards, with a smile upon his face; but I cannot tell what was stirring at his heart.

Yet I persevered; for I knew well enough that to eradicate the melancholy of years, was not a thing to be accomplished in a day. I persevered; for I saw that I was succeeding, although I had not consummated my success. There were seasons, when no effort upon my part, no out-burst of ludicrous hilarity, no facetious anecdote, or humorous story, could light up his features with a smile. On these occasions, when I spoke to him, he did not hear me, or hearing me, he would only answer with a monosyllable to my questions, "Yes," or "No," and to my stories, always "Good." Then I would think it best to leave him to his solitude, hoping, that when alone, an out-burst of feeling, an uncontrolled flood of tears might relieve him. Oh! indeed, I would have laid down my life to have brought joy to poor Anstruther's heart; and I did bend all the powers of my mind to the accomplishment of this one cherished object.

I rose early, and I seldom retired to my bed till past midnight; for Anstruther was an uncertain sleeper, and I was most unwilling to leave him to the agony of his nocturnal meditations. Sometimes, when after a day of hard exercise, I beheld with delight the weariness of my friend, I would persuade him at an earlier hour than usual to seek

the repose that his tired frame required ; and dismissing his valet, I would tend him with my own hands ; and when his head was laid upon the pillow, I would take a volume of poetry, and read to him in a drawling, somniferous voice,—than which there is no harder trial to a young person vain of his genius,—until I had *sung* him fairly to sleep ; and then I would retire, with noiseless steps, rejoicing in the success of my machinations.

But one night, I well remember that I had withdrawn to my own apartment, and I was writing in my beautiful studio, when Anstruther entered the room with the rich folds of his *robe de chambre*, enveloping his almost naked frame. He could not sleep, and he said that he came to enjoy a little more of my conversation. I desired Guido to withdraw, and then I asked Mr. Anstruther, whether I should read to him. He thanked me, and replied in the affirmative. “ And suppose,” said he, putting into my hand a book, which had been lying upon the table, “ that you read a few scenes from Shakspeare, for of *his* works we never can be tired.”

The play that I selected was *Macbeth*, and I commenced at the fourth act. I read on without interruption, until I reached the scene, where news is brought to Macduff, of the massacre of his wife and children. Then I felt that I had read too far ; I knew that I was touching upon the most sensi-

the chord which thrilled through Anstruther's heart; but I durst not pause; I thought it wisest to proceed; and keeping my eyes fixed upon the pages of the books, though they traced not the characters that were written there, I articulated in a faltering voice, the well-known lamentation of Macduff:—

“He has no children—All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? what all? oh! hell-kite! all!
What all my pretty chickens and their dam,
At one fell swoop?”

I read no more; for I had scarcely uttered these words, ere a groan of intensest agony escaped from Anstruther's breast. “Hold! hold! in God's name, Gerard, no more of that; I cannot bear it,” he exclaimed, and looking up, I beheld the convulsive distortions of his wan face, whilst he writhed like a crushed worm, and I almost feared that I had killed him.

I could not speak; it must have been a fearful sight to have seen us two at that moment. There was Anstruther writhing upon a couch; his corpse-like, distorted face, upturned, and his hands clenched; I, pale and motionless as a marble statue, sitting erectly in a chair, with my starting eyes fixed steadfastly upon the countenance of my friend, and the book still open in my hand. I am sure that the agony of that moment must have

been equally shared by me ; for I thought that my benefactor was dying, and that my folly and imprudence had slain him.

“ All my pretty ones !” sobbed Anstruther, his breast heaving convulsively as he spoke,—“ all at one fell swoop, the dam and her chickens, Gerard ! not one left to bless the old man ; he has no children, none to bless him ;”—then burying his face in his hands, a flood of tears came to his relief ; and he shivered all over, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and then he was calmer.

“ Oh ! Gerard,” continued the afflicted man, in a broken sentence, “ I should not have asked you to read that, it was my fault entirely, my own ;” then checking himself, he continued,—“ but I am weak and foolish ; can you tell me the hour of the night ?”

I replied that it was past mid-night ; and then, Anstruther, starting suddenly from his recumbent posture, asked in hurried accents, and with an affectation of levity, “ Do you think that there are lights in the billiard-room ?”

“ I think not, but I will send Guido to light up the room.”

“ Oh ! no,” returned Anstruther in a compassionate tone of voice ; “ do not disturb the poor little fellow, for doubtless he has fallen asleep.”

Then with increased vivacity,—“ I’ll tell you

what, Gerard, I have been thinking that if we two were to set to work gravely, we might produce a right good novel in concert,—a humorous one, full of “merrie conceits,”—something like “Pene-grine Pickle.” I’ll tell you what I propose for the plot of it; or, give me a pen, I will sketch out the frame-work, and then we will fill it up together.”

“Oh! delightful,” I exclaimed, as I placed before Anstruther, my quaintly-devised ink-stand, but I could not help thinking of Cowper and John Gilpin; and I silently quoted to myself these lines from Chapman’s *Hero and Leander* :—

“ Ay me, but hard it is
To exercise a false and forced bliss;
Ill may a sad mind forge a merry face,
Nor hath constrained laughter any grace.”

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHILDLESS MAN, AND THE LITTLE CHILD.

“ Sir, will you walk with me ?
Your conversation throbs about my heart
Like new-born hope ; I seem at last to have found
A book, which I would read most seriously.
Come, you shall be my tutor and my friend.”

HORNE'S *Cosmo de Medici*.

Not long after the occurrence of the little incident detailed in the last chapter, one fine clear morning in the first week of December, Anstruther and I were walking together in the park, conversing cheerfully upon various topics of general interest, and much enjoying the dry coldness of the weather, which imparted a briskness to our motions, and even caused a slight hue of health to blush on the pale cheek of my companion. An-

struther was in unwontedly good¹ spirits; I had scarcely ever known him to be so vivacious, and for once I did not think that he dissembled.

And as we passed along one of the noble avenues of trees, for which the Charlton estates were so remarkable, I heard a voice, not far from us, calling aloud repeatedly the word, "Rover."

It was a child's voice, clear and musical; and "Rover, Rover!" was the cry. "Whose voice is that?" asked Anstruther, and his own faltered as he spoke. I looked at him, and I thought that he trembled.

"It is a child's voice," I replied, "and it seems to be calling to a dog."

"I had scarcely answered when from behind one of the trees a little spaniel emerged into sight, and presently a rosy-cheeked cottage child, about five or six years of age, came running after the dog close before us still crying out, "Rover, Rover!"

I smiled to see the earnestness with which the little boy pursued his four-footed favourite; bare-headed, and his cheeks ruddy with exercise, on he went quite out of breath, scarcely taking notice of us as he passed. The dog frisked and gamboled, first running forward, and then backward, as though he delighted in thus tantalizing the urchin. It was a pleasant sight, but Anstruther thought otherwise. He liked it not. "Gerard," said he in

a voice harsh with emotion ; “ whose child is that ? Tell me.”

“ I do not know—’tis a pretty child, and how earnestly—”

But Anstruther interrupted me. “ Speak to him, Gerard, if you please, and inquire the name of his father.”

Wondering, I hastened to obey.—“ Come here, my little fellow,” I cried ; and the progress of the child was arrested.

He stared at me, and looked frightened, as though he had done some wrong, but I encouraged him with kind words, and then I asked him his name.

“ Johnny Haughton,” replied the urchin ; “ and Rover is the name of my dog,—a naughty dog he is, for he runs away from me ;” and the child looked as though he were desirous to continue his pursuit of the quadruped.

“ And who is your father, my little man ?”

“ Father,—why, he be my father,”—and then, after a few moments reflection,—“ he be garden-man to the squire.”

“ Now, run along as quick as you can,” said I, and having returned to Mr. Anstruther, I acquainted him what I had learned, still in ignorance of the cause of his anxiety.

“ John Haughton,” said Anstruther in a stern, slow voice ; “ and one of my under-gardeners. Now remember, Gerard, that I give orders to

Price (Price was the steward), for this man's dismissal."

"His dismissal," I exclaimed in a deprecating tone.

"Yes, Gerard, his dismissal."

"I shall not forget, Sir," said I, in a voice of sorrowful submission.

My accents found their way to the heart of my companion; he was touched by the sadness of my manner, and he returned in a milder voice, "You think I am harsh, my dear Gerard,—and perhaps I am; but upon this subject I have issued my orders so repeatedly that I cannot bear again to be disobeyed. You do not comprehend me, I see,—for that, which to you is pleasant, to me is wormwood,—*the sight of young children*. Oh! Gerard, you know not how it maddens me to look on a little child,—it is one of the fairest sights in nature, but to my morbid vision it is "more hideous than the sea-monster,"—and that which gladdens the hearts of others, strikes anguish into my soul. You comprehend me; I see that you do,—then no longer think that I am harsh. What avails it that you are with me, and that we laugh, and jest, and play at billiards, and read Scarron, whilst little children are suffered to run about before me, and mock me till I am almost mad."

There was a pause, which I was the first to interrupt;—"But, John Haughton?" said I, look-

ing up with an appealing expression of countenance into poor Anstruther's face—

“Is forgiven for your sake, Gerard,”—and he took me affectionately by the hand,—“but speak to him, and use your endeavours to spare me this misery again.”

“Oh! that I will; it shall never be so again; but now let us turn homewards, and have some fun in the billiard-room. If you give me ten in the hundred, I'll bet you my best Rembrandt to an Annual print, that I beat you in five-and-twenty minutes.”

And thus endeavouring to turn the current of Anstruther's thoughts into a more joyous channel, I passed my arm through that of my friend, and together we proceeded towards the abbey.

“I think,” said Anstruther, with a forced smile upon his face, “that a gallop would do me more good than a game of billiards; we will order the horses after luncheon.”

“Oh! yes!—” I exclaimed joyously; “and I'll ride you a steeple-race to M—— church; but not upon the same conditions. I wish, Mr. Anstruther—”

“And I wish, dear Gerard,” interrupted my kind friend,—“that you would not call me *Mister* Anstruther.”

“Then, Anstruther”—

“No, Gerard, I am weak and foolish. You

will think me, perhaps, in my dotage; but I like all those, whom I love very much, to call me my Christian name. I say 'all those,' when there is but *one* in the world, by whom I desire thus to be addressed; there is but one whom I love very much—and he—you, Gerard—must call me *Edwin*."

"Edwin!"—and this was all that I could answer; for I was almost stifled by the intensity of my emotions.

"Oh! pleasant—very pleasant thus to be addressed; I did not think, when my mother died, that I should ever be called *Edwin* again."

I struggled against my feelings, and, at length, I triumphed. I re-assumed my outward serenity, and fearful lest Anstruther should again relapse into the despondency from which I had almost rescued him, when the respectful formality of my address re-awakened in his mind the bitter reflection of his almost solitary condition, I again began to talk cheerfully, nay, indeed, ridiculously; garnishing my conversation with images the most remotely ludicrous that my fancy could suggest, and willingly incurring the risk of being esteemed flippant, in the hope of exciting the mirth of my friend. Thus doing a violence to my nature; for very seldom, indeed, was I otherwise than most subdued, I returned towards the abbey, with my dejected friend, and ere we had crossed the

threshold of the house, a laugh, not loud, but plainly insistent, burst from him, and I knew that I had succeeded.

The post-bags had already arrived at the abbey; and amongst others there was one re-directed by my uncle Pemberton, from my generous friend Sir Reginald Euston. He wrote from London, whither he had just arrived from the Continent with his bride; and he reminded me of my promise to meet him at Christmas, and said that, during his absence, he had often thought of me, and spoken of me so often to Lady Euston, that she was determined to see me at the hall, as *her* guest, during Christmas, "and therefore," added Sir Reginald, "you must come :

' For when a lady's in the case,
You know all other things give place.'

Besides, we must talk over your future prospects; and I must ask what you think of a certain appointment in the—but I will say nothing until you come—and, therefore, I say COME. Fix any day before Christmas; and there shall be a carriage awaiting you at Exeter. Lady E. is very imperative; and as this is her first request, you know that you cannot refuse it."

"Refuse? how can I refuse Reginald Euston?" but I thought of poor Edwin Anstruther.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BRIMMING OF THE WINE-CUP.

“ For these your favours done to me,
(Being a poor stranger,) my best powers shall prove
By acts of worth the soundness of my love.

— Herein your love shall best set out itself
By staying with us.”

OLD FORTUNATUS

I WAS NO longer the ‘unloved one,’ yearning after blessings which were denied to me. I had asked for love, and I had not solicited in vain. My “golden chalice,” was almost full to the brim of “bright wine.”

Anstruther, Euston, my uncle Pemberton, my cousin Emily, Michael and Ella, I knew that they loved me ; and whom did I love most in return ?

ELLA MOORE!

How often have I wished that I could parcel out my individuality into divers portions, so as to be present in many places at one period of time. Love is for the most part jealous and exacting; it requires infinite tact to be loved by many, and yet to offend none.

Tact!—I scarcely think that I have ever traced the characters of this word before. I do not like it; 'tis one of those conventional words, which came in with the legitimacy of lies. When nature and truth were voted out of fashion, and art, with its kinswoman, hypocrisy, were exalted in their stead, then people began to exercise *tact*. Tact is nothing better than a combination of various artful subterfuges blended into one harmonious whole, and skilfully varnished over. I believe that it is useful to its possessor; but it is a possession I am well content to forego; for, whatever difficulties truth leads me into, I can cheerfully bear up against, and “steer right onward,” without a murmur.

But, when many love us, and desire our presence at the same time, what are we to do?—What we ought to do; to be candid and ingenuous, to speak out openly and sincerely. No subterfuges, no half-confessions, no compromises with truth; but full and entire honesty, concealing nothing, adding nothing, altering nothing; and

then, if we be not loved the better for our ingenuousness, we have not been loved at all.

“ Edwin ! ” —

“ My dear boy ! ” —

“ You have heard me speak of Sir Reginald Euston.”

“ Oh ! yes; you said that he has been kind to you ; methinks I could love him for *that*.”

“ I have just had a letter from him ; will you read it, and tell me what I ought to do ? ”

Anstruther took the letter, and, reading it, his countenance became clouded over, until it settled into the old look of utter despondency, which it wore the first time I beheld him. I could see a tear slowly stealing down on either side of his pale thin face as he silently folded up the letter, and returned it to me, looking into my eyes with an appealing expression of fondness, which seemed to say, “ And will you too leave me alone ? ”

I felt at this moment that I could cleave to him for ever. Pitying and loving him as I did, to their very base were my resolutions shaken ; for he who had been kinder to me than any living creature, was now in an agony, from which a few words of mine could release him, and knowing this, I was almost tempted to utter those few words.

But Anstruther was the first to speak. “ Do you love this man, Gerard ? ” said he.

"I do; he was the first to take me by the hand, at a time when there were none to help me."

"He is gay and cheerful; he keeps open house; he hunts, shoots, and drinks like a man; he is a meeter companion for you, than a broken-down creature like myself."

"Oh! talk not in this strain, I beseech you; for this is the language of mistrust. You cannot, I am sure you do not doubt the strength of my gratitude and affection. I trust in you; for with a full assurance that you will tell me what it becomes me to do, I now ask your advice, and by your advice will I be guided."

"Then go—it becomes you, go; I wish, I intreat you to go."

With a choaking voice were these last words uttered, and had I not thought of Ella Moore, at this moment, I should have thrown myself into Anstruther's arms, and sobbed out, "No,—never will I leave you!"

But, my love for Ella was very strong, and I panted to behold her once again. This it was, that, more than all other things, steeled my heart against the miseries of Anstruther. — No, not steeled it; but my love for the cottage maiden, triumphed over my pity, my gratitude, and my affection for him who had been more than a father to me; so I said, "It wrings my heart, as it does yours, to think that we should ever be sundered;

but what can I say to Reginald Euston? For many years he has been to me a friend; he stooped to succour me, when I was a companionless boy,—years before I knew you——.”

“ Oh! I know it, Gerard,” interrupted Anstruther, in a heart-rending voice, “ I am but a new friend, and it is asking too much, that you should give up your older ones for me. I am exacting and selfish;—I acknowledge it. I require too much in exchange for the little that I have to give. I do not reflect that I sacrifice nothing, by giving myself up wholly to you. I am desolate; there are many who love, many who are beloved by, *you*. I ought to take these things into account, and strike the balance more fairly—therefore, I say, Gerard, go. You see that I *can* make a sacrifice.—Go, go,—but you will return?”

“ Yes—and quickly—but for one month.”

“ A month—thirty days and nights, and all this time to be alone! but what is that to one like me, who, for fifteen years, has been companionless?”

“ ’Tis a little time.”

“ But a month,” continued Anstruther, despondingly, not hearing what last I had said.—“ A month, did you say—a whole long month? No, no, Gerard, not a month.”

“ ’Twill very soon pass away.”

" Ah ! to you ; but it will be a century to me, it will indeed."

" Say a fortnight then—only a fortnight, to visit my family, and all."

" No, no ; I exact too much ; I am selfish—but you cannot tell, Gerard, what it is, after fifteen years of darkness, to enjoy a few glimpses of light. You cannot tell what it is to have that blessed stranger-light obscured, and to grovel in your old blindness again. But go—you will return in a month—and the food of hope shall sustain my soul in solitude, throughout all that time. A month then, be absent for a month—not one day longer, if you love me."

" I promise."

" And all this time no cheerful walks, no pleasant riding excursions, no merry games of billiards for me. To hear no droll stories from your lips, no flashes of wit and merriment, to see no smile upon your face, to hear not your ringing laughter, —to see you not, to hear you not at all, for a long dreary, interminable month. But, you will not go quite yet ; not to-day, nor to-morrow, nor next day."

" In a week.—Oh ! not before a week."

" And we will be merry, Gerard, till then. We will ride, and walk, and play at billiards, and laugh over the ' Comic Romance.' Do you think that the horses are ready ?"

"They were ordered to be at the door after luncheon."

"True," cried Anstruther, rising from the sofa; "and we have not lunched yet; so come to the luncheon room. I do not think though, that I can eat."

"It wants yet an hour of the accustomed time, shall we anticipate it, or ride out at once, or go and have a game at billiards?"

"A game of billiards," returned Anstruther; "we will play for an hour; and then take a gallop towards M——. Send for little Guido to score for us. I think that I shall beat you to-day."

And straightway we proceeded towards the billiard-room. Oh! indeed, it is a hard trial to laugh, to jest, and to wear a smooth, joyous countenance, when the heart is well nigh bursting within. I was in wretched spirits, and I could have lain down, and wept like a child, at the very moment that I was talking wild nonsense, and knocking the billiard-balls about with an energy that could not have been surpassed, had my whole soul been in the game. For Anstruther's sake, I was constrained to appear joyous, and to do a violence against my own nature, more painful than language can express. I, who, my whole life long, had given vent to all the impulses of my

soul, now felt myself morally obliged to constrain them, and to play a part, which I had never done before. In truth, I was called upon to sacrifice over much, when Anstruther selected me to be his friend. I was a willing sacrifice. I was spell-bound, and I could not resist his appeals. He called upon me to sacrifice liberty, truth, gladness, health, and home—to change my nature, to be no longer young, to abandon all pleasure, all society, all love, beyond that which I could drink at his own fountain, and I felt that I was powerless to deny him. I had a sort of presentiment that I was killing myself; and that the kind of life that I was then leading, would hurry me into an early grave; but for all this, I did not turn aside from my purpose, I was resolute to persevere even to the death.

Once, and only once, during the week, which preceded the day of my departure, did Anstruther allude to the dreaded event, and then it was in language expressive of the admiration, and the more than gratitude which my kindness had awakened in his bosom. “To give up,” said Anstruther, “so much for me—how kind, how generous, how god-like!”

And the answer, which I returned, is explanatory of the guiding principle which actuated my behaviour towards my friend. “You are alone

and therefore will I cleave to you. Others love me, and others by me are beloved; but they all have more than one pillar supporting the structure of their love. Upon me, alone, do you lean; you say that I am all-in-all to you, but to others I am but one of a number. Take away my support from them, and still they stand erect; from you, and you fall prostrate in the dust. No, no—I will cling to *you*; and we will lean upon one another for ever.”

“My son—my adopted son!” sobbed Anstruther, as he laid his head upon my shoulder and wept.

And suddenly, as Anstruther uttered these words a ray of light, which had never shone there before, entered the dark places of my brain. I started, as though I had been seared with a hot iron, and disengaging myself from the embrace of my friend, I cried in harsh and hurried accents, “What was that you said, Mr. Anstruther?”

“My son! my heir! my adopted!”

“Thus ends, then, our covenant!” said I, the energy of my manner giving place to a subdued expression of bitter disappointment. “It is over; the spell is broken; and we can no longer live together as friends.”

“What mean you?—Oh! tell me, Gerard, the import of those strange words.”

“Listen,” said I, in a calm, clear voice; “listen.

I thought that I was honest; I thought that my love for you was pure gold, unmingled with the dross of selfishness; I thought that I clung to you because you lacked support; I thought that I dwelt with you because you were solitary. This faith can sustain me no longer. You speak of adoption, and call me your heir: can I any longer confide in the purity of my motives? I begin to mistrust myself already. You are rich, and I am a beggar; you are childless, and I worm myself into your affections. I am a legacy-hunter, a parasite, a rich man's minion. I bitterly despise myself already. The very servants will sneer at me; the lowest groom in the stable will point at me. The pleasant veil of delusion has been torn from my eyes, and the pillar of my faith knocked from under me. I dreamed that I was honest; and I awake from my dream, and find myself a pitiful scoundrel!"

"Gerard, Gerard! you talk wildly.—I do not comprehend what you mean."

"You called me your heir—your adopted one."

"And you are."

"Oh! no, no!—unsay those words, I beseech you. I must not, I will not, be your heir. Love me, but do not adopt me. Let me still be assured of my honesty; let me still feel that my motives for loving, and for clinging to you, are pure. Answer me, then, one question,—*Is it written?*"

"It is."

"Oh! too hasty!—I might have been a scoundrel, a designer;—but it can be undone, and that at the moment. *I* will do it. Give me the papers, and then I will prove to you that I am honest."

"Gerard, Gerard!" cried Anstruther; "I never doubted it for a moment."

"But perchance I may doubt myself; so give them to me; indeed, it will be kindest. I insist—*or*, if you would rather, I will quit your house, never to return to it."

There was an earnestness and a decision in my voice, and in my manner, which fully assured Mr. Anstruther that I would execute all that I threatened. But still he hesitated: he rose from his seat, looked towards the door, then at me, and reassumed his seat, in silence, as though he were in a painful state of incertitude. "Bring them, bring them," I repeated; then, pointing towards the fire, I added, "See how brightly it burns!"

Every muscle of Anstruther's face worked convulsively, as he replied, in a scarcely audible tone, "Yes, Gerard!—I will—bring them."

He walked, with tottering steps, towards the door, left the room, and presently returned with a scroll of parchment in his hand. "There, Gerard!—the struggle is over. I do not love you the less."

I did not look at the document, but threw it at

once upon the blazing fire. The parchment crackled, and blistered, and split; but it was long ere the tough skin was reduced to the nothingness of ashes. "Burn! burn!" said I.

"It will not be burnt," returned Anstruther;—"see how it clings to existence; and why destroy it? What a silly piece of mummery! Another slip of parchment, and another stroke of the pen;—why, Gerard, it costs you more time and more trouble to annihilate this old document, than it would take me to draw up a new one."

"Ha!—but it will surely perish soon; and you will not reproduce what I have destroyed.—Nay, nay, Edwin!" coaxingly, I added; "that would be hardly fair."

Anstruther answered not, and I continued:—"But you will promise?—I'm sure that you will, because I ask you, dear Edwin."

He looked at me, fondly, for a moment, and then faltered out, "I—do—promise."

And, at length, arrived the dreaded morning of my departure from Charlton Abbey. In my pleasant and beautiful studio, behold me preparing for my journey, little Guido assisting me, with an unshed tear glistening in his dark eye. The poor boy loved me with an idolatry which few but his countrymen ever feel. I had been kind to him; and his servitude had been an easy one. I had never spoken harshly to him, nor ever reprimanded

him, and I had conversed with him almost as with an equal. He could not bear to think of my departure; and his heart was heavy, though he knew that I would return. I could not but perceive the unhappiness of the boy; and perceiving it, my heart was melted into tenderness, and I took compassion on him. "Guido," I said, "would you like to accompany me into Devonshire?"

The boy's face brightened up, as he made answer,— "Oh! so much, sir!—so very much, indeed! But do you think, sir, that the strange servants will laugh at me, because I am a foreigner?"

I smiled, and returned, "Certainly not, in the house to which I am going."

"Then you *will* take Guido with you, sir?" said the young Italian, with an earnestness of manner which betrayed the excess of his delight.

"I will; you shall sit beside me in the carriage. You know that Mr. Anstruther has lent me his travelling-chariot, and that I am to post it to Exeter.—But what is this parcel of books?"

"Mr. Anstruther placed it on the table, Sir," replied little Guido, "this morning."

I took up the parcel; opened it, and there I found a collection of old quarto plays—original editions of John Marston's works, including his Satyres. On a small slip of paper, accompany-

ing the books,* was written, "Give these to your⁴ father."

I was touched by this little act of kindness; and I began to ask myself whether my behaviour towards Anstruther had been all that it ought to have been—whether, in any one instance, I had failed in my duty towards my friend. And looking back upon all that had passed between us, I thought that I could detect a shadow of disingenuousness obscuring one part of my conduct, and that spite of my endeavours to be so, I had not been thoroughly consistent. And what was the evil thing that I had done?

I was about to leave Anstruther for a month, avowedly to visit Reginald Euston. I was anxious to see my family; but I was still more anxious to see Ella Moore. Now, I had not told Anstruther this; I had placed the necessity of my departure entirely to the score of my gratitude towards Sir Reginald; but I had said nothing of the undercurrent of desire more powerful than the visible stream of circumstances which propelled me in the direction that I was going. It is true, that had Sir Reginald entreated me to visit him, in any spot of the country, however far remote from that wherein Ella was living, I should, at least I *thought* that I should, have accepted his invitation with equal alacrity; but I did not rest satisfied with this belief; I had acted disingenuously in conceal-

ing part of the truth—in attributing the sole motive for my departure to my gratitude for Reginald Euston—in abstaining from any allusion to Ella Moore, as though my attachment to her had been criminal; and these misgivings sadly disquieted me, the more so because I esteemed my conduct, in all other respects, irreproachable.

To be conscious of having fallen into a single error is often more galling than the consciousness of many. It is a hard thing to be only one step from the summit of the ladder of perfection.

“ We get so near, so very, very near,
 ’Tis an old tale : Jove strikes the Titans down,
 Not when they set about their mountain-piling,
 But when another rock would crown their work.”

Running a race, or competing for any prize, it is less annoyance to be distanced than to be second. Ridiculous as it may appear, there is nothing in the world so disquieting as to select the next number in a lottery to that which procures the great prize. It is nothing to draw a blank ; but the ticket next to the prize—oh ! such a dispensation is intolerable.

Pondering these things with a heavy heart, I heard Anstruther’s well-known footsteps approaching my chamber-door. Then a sudden impulse seized me ; and without reflecting, for a moment, upon the consequences of what I was about to do,

I said, within myself, "Come what will, my bosom shall be unburthened of the secret load that oppresses it; I will confess myself; every inmost thought and feeling shall be divulged in the presence of my friend."

He entered, and I dismissed Guido. With some little offering of kindness had Anstruther sought me in my studio; but I waited not to receive the offering, nor to acknowledge the kindness; I thought only of my disingenuousness, and I was impatient to wipe away the one leprous blot which sullied the purity of my soul. I had offended; and I was eager to atone for the offence that I had committed by acknowledging it. "Gerard, I have brought you," began Anstruther; but I interrupted him in an earnest and impassioned voice, exclaiming, whilst my chest heaved with emotion, and my eyes glistened with tears—"I do not deserve your kindness; I am unworthy,—ungrateful,—and I have cheated you."

"Gerard!"

"I have imposed upon you, deluded you with a lie;—I have been an hypocrite, and I have grossly deceived you."

"No, no! Gerard—you cannot mean what you say;—you are all truth and openness, my boy."

"So you thought; but I am wily, and a hypocrite. I told you that I am forced to leave you, that I might visit Sir Reginald Euston."

“ Yes—and your family ; I read ‘ Sir Reginald’s letter—how can you have imposed upon me in this ? ”

“ Oh ! I have—I told you that I was anxious to see Sir Reginald, because he had been kind to me ; and *this* is true ; I told you that I desired to see my family, because I had been long absent ; and this is true : but, when, by pausing here, I implied that there were none others whom I panted to behold again, I deceived you ; I cheated you : for my heart tells me plainly, that there is one at least, whom more than Sir Reginald, more than all the members of the family, I love, and now yearn to embrace.”

Then rapidly I poured out the secret of my long-cherished love for Ella Moore. I traced the whole history of my passion from its earliest development to the day of my departure from Meadowbank, when Ella wept to think of my going. I spake of Mrs. Moore, of Michael and of Lawrence,—their condition, the manner of their lives, their lowliness, and yet their gentleness : I left nothing concerning them untold. Then I entered into the narrative, derived from my uncle, of General Kirby, and of his misguided wife ; I told him that Ella Moore was her daughter ; that she was not even the offspring of honest parents ; that, perhaps, she was a child of shame, but that still I loved her. I enlarged upon the beauty, the grace, the entire loveliness of the cottage-maiden.

I said that she would adorn a palace, that she was endowed with an innate perception of the becoming, which in the entire absence of all conventional knowledge, rendered her the gentlest of the gentle. I spake freely and in hurried accents, sometimes almost inaudible from emotion; I thought of nothing, but of unburthening my soul; my eyes swam in tears, so that I could but dimly perceive the countenance of him whom I addressed. It was an honest impulse that urged me on; I was not then acting the inquisitor.

I had often dreamt that Ella Moore was the daughter of Edwin Anstruther; I had often prayed that my dreams might be realized. But now no vague, wild fancies of this nature entered my brain. I did not even think about the book,—the Erasmus, which connected,—yet how slender was the link!—the history of the Kirbys, and the Moores, with that of my mysterious friend.

It is a truth, that when I began to love Anstruther,—truly and entirely to love him, I ceased to regard him as a mysterious being, and I no longer desired to lift the veil of his sorrow. I cannot find it in my heart to act the spy towards one whom I love.

My story was told; from the secret burthen, which weighed so heavily upon my soul, I had now disengaged myself entirely, and I felt very happy in my freedom. I was silent, and I looked at Anstruther through my tears. He was

seemingly enveloped in a shroud of thought, for he spake not when my narrative was ended, and he was sitting with one elbow resting on his knee, whilst his clenched hand supported his head, and his eyes were looking fixedly upon the ground. Then I laid my hand gently upon his shoulder, saying, "Will you forgive me after this?"

He raised his head, and the expression of his face was that of mingled inquietude and affection, as he said, "Love needs not forgiveness—"

"But hypocrisy!"

"Nay, nay, Gerard; talk not about this, but about your love for the cottage-maiden. I am sadly disquieted upon your account, for you are in a strange and a dangerous position,—loving, and beloved by, a cottage-girl,—the offspring of an illicit connexion; you have grown up from boyhood to manhood, your love has grown with your growth, and strengthened with your strength; such love as this cannot be weeded out from the binding soil of your affectionate heart,—nor from hers; then what is to be the result of this unhappy attachment?"

"Unhappy!—oh! indeed it is not that; but a blessing above all other blessings is the pure love of Ella Moore."

"Ah! you think so; but tell me now, Gerard, what is the consummation of pure love?"

"Marriage."

“And will you marry this girl?”

I was not in the least startled by the question, and I answered unreservedly, “*I will.*”

Anstruther for a few moments was silent, and then he said in a serene voice—it was the serenity of intense feeling,—“Well, Gerard, I am not one who would advise you to control the genuine impulses of an honest nature, and to subject yourself to any conventional obligations which are likely to mar the happiness of your future. Methinks I know you well enough to be assured that with you to be loved is to be blest, and that beyond the pale of the affections, you desire very little to make the world to you a Paradise of delight. Gerard, I cannot exhort you to cast off this cottage girl;—love on, but with all honesty,—love, and continue to be loved. What need you fear? Not poverty; it is not possible that you should ever be poor. The contumely of the world? A feather! Let the world prate; you will know that you are honest, and to *be* is better than to *seem*. The reproaches of your family? If Ella Moore resemble the creature that you have described, your family, to a member, will love her, and be proud of her; for what does it matter that she has once dwelt in a cottage? Princes ere now have done the same. You say that she is gentle, graceful, and lovely,—that she has mind, and heart, and beauty,—that——”

“Oh ! yes,” I exclaimed, eagerly breaking in upon Anstruther’s discourse, — “she is everything, and more than I have described,—she is the very essence of feminine loveliness,—she is—but more than all language, a picture will convey to you what I mean.—I have her portrait ; I painted it myself ; ’tis a rude specimen of art, but it shadows forth, though faintly indeed, the beauty of the original, and in line and colour it is a likeness which all who see it judge to be correct.”

As I said this, I unlocked my writing-case and took from it my portrait of Ella. I had painted it a few days before my departure from Meadowbank, partly from life and partly from memory, and the likeness was strikingly correct. It was a full-length portrait, and I had drawn her sleeking the plumage of a dove. The idea was commonplace, but the occupation was graceful, and thus I had seen her employed but a short time before I entered upon my pleasant labour of love. A wood-pigeon maimed and mutilated, but alive, had dropped from the wing in Mrs. Moore’s garden, and Ella, who, all tenderness and compassion, had a heart to pity the meanest thing in the creation, if distressed, had raised the crippled bird, and nursed it until it was again able to fly. Once I saw her fondling her wounded favourite, and seeing her, I cried out, “Oh ! Ella, how I should like to paint you thus !”

And thus I did paint her, "Now is not that beautiful—face and figure both?" I exclaimed, as I put into Anstruther's hand my portrait of Ella Moore.

"My God! and is *this* Ella Moore?" cried Anstruther, in a choaking voice, trembling all over as he spoke, "My,—my—my," and though his lips moved, what he would have said was wholly inaudible. Covering his face with both his hands, he threw himself back in his seat; his chest dilated, and then sunk again, a loud groan succeeding every anhelation. Fear and astonishment took possession of me, and all that I could articulate was "Edwin!" I was pale, and powerless, as a marble statue. I could neither act, nor move, nor speak. But what could I have done, had my energies not forsaken me? Oh! nothing; for these violent paroxysms, like volcanoes, must burn themselves out, and it is as easy to control the one, as it is to mitigate the other. I had seen him before in an agony of a like nature, though much less fearful than this; and I knew, if the confusion of ideas, which accompanies a great alarm, can properly be designated knowledge, that the sight of Ella's portrait, by some strange power of association, had jarred, with a painful crash, upon the chords of poor Anstruther's mind, now wrought into an extreme state of tension. It was evident, that a sudden rush of agonizing

thoughts had overwhelmed him; but the nature of those overwhelming thoughts was a subject of after speculation.

Silently watching the wretched man, I saw the tears gushing through his fingers, as he still veiled his face with his hand. He wept aloud; and it was good for him that he did so, for much better is it to sob than to groan; and that dry, tearless sorrow is the most heart-breaking of all. He wept, and I feared no longer, for I knew that the paroxysm of Anstruther's grief, would expand itself in a torrent of tears. And thus it happened; for when he had wept awhile, he withdrew his hands from his streaming eyes, and looked wildly round the chamber, as though he were awaking from a fearful dream, and not yet fully assured of his consciousness, he said in a voice scarcely rising above a whisper, "Gerard, what have I been doing?"

To this question I made no answer; and Anstruther, laying his hand upon my arm, continued in a more audible voice, "What a poor fool you must think me! I am fit only to be the inmate of a mad-house. I do not know for what purpose. I am kept alive in the world, a torment to myself, and a curse to all around me, cut off by the strangeness of my nature—no, no, no; not my nature, but my destiny, from the congregation of my fellows. I think that it would be much better

for me to lay myself down and die. What need is there that I, a wretched old man, should live but to blast the promise of your joy,—a canker, a blight, an unwholesome mildew. I came hither, meaning to be cheerful, and I—;” then as though he suddenly recollected the exciting cause of the paroxysm, that had seized him, he continued no more to speak in vague, general terms, but soliloquizing, rather than addressing himself to me, he added, “It was a portrait, yes, a portrait—so very like, but how can that be? Form, feature, all like *hers*; the same soft smile upon her face; the same—. You said, Gerard, that her name is Ellen Moore.”

“Ella Moore.”

“And a pretty name too. Now give me the picture again, for I should like to look at it for a moment. I did not think that you were such a good artist. I could almost think that it breathes. I wonder, Gerard, what it could have been that brought that *fit* so suddenly upon me. You see that I can look at the picture;—I once was a painter myself. To-morrow we will go out sketching; there are some good views to be had in the neighbourhood, and I will send to M——, for some books.”

“To-morrow?—You forget that I am going—”

“Going?—Where are you going?” interrupted the wretched man, for he was wandering, and his

memory was clouded. "I thought I heard you speak of going somewhere to-morrow."

"Oh! you forget," said I, in a tremulous voice, "now think a little. This is the day, that was determined upon, for my departure into Devonshire. The chariot is to be here at noon; you know that you have lent me your chariot.—So good of you!—Now, just think."

"To be sure.—Ha, ha!—how ludicrous, that I should have forgotten. I think that I am the most absent person that ever lived in the world. At twelve o'clock;—oh! yes, I remember all about it. The chariot—Devonshire—and Sir Reginald Euston. That fit has quite confounded my intellect. And you will write to me, *very* soon—a good long letter, remember; *crossed*, and as close as you like. I came here to bring you last evening's papers, and the new number of the *Edinburgh Review*; don't forget to have them stowed in the pocket of the carriage; as they may amuse you during the journey. There is an article of Brougham's in the Review; and a joint-stock composition, by Messrs. Jeffery and Hazlitt. Just lend me that *aigrette* of yours. I feel, now, perfectly recovered."

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CHAPTER XX.

THE SECRET REVEALED.

Now, since we are alone, let us examine
The question which has long disturbed my mind
With doubt——

It is a hidden secret,
Which I must fathom."

SHELLEY.

IMAGINE, kind reader, that my journey is accomplished, that I have crossed the hospitable threshold of my old friend Reginald Euston, and am once more in the neighbourhood—the pleasant neighbourhood of my family, and the Moores.

No contrast was ever more complete, than that which the mirth and jollity of Fox Hall presented to the gloom of Charlton Abbey. A thousand similes come swarming upon my brain; but I cannot pause to select one from the crowd. I

think that the transit from the one place to the other was certainly the salvation of my health, for during my sojourn with Anstruther, I had become pale, feeble, and emaciated. My constitution was naturally vigorous, but such a life as I led at the Abbey was sufficient to induce a decline of the vital energies, which, but for an occasional digression into more cheerful scenes, might have hurried me into a premature grave.

But in Fox Hall I breathed an atmosphere of cheerfulness. Sir Reginald had only anticipated my arrival by a few days, bringing with him his beautiful bride; and the whole neighbourhood was in bustle and confusion. There was to be a large party of gentry at the Hall, during Christmas week, and the poor were to be sumptuously regaled with beef and other welcome esculents. Blankets were to be distributed, and oxen roasted, and coals given away. Every body in the neighbourhood, rich and poor, was in a flutter of expectation and excitement, precisely identical with that of the army, on the eve of a brevet.

Sir Reginald received me with open arms, and presented me to Lady Euston, who cordially extended her hand, whilst a sweet smile of welcome played upon her beautiful mouth. She was, indeed, a fair creature—a perfect woman—gentle, feminine, and yielding, but neither weak nor indolent, as pretty women generally are. I do not

think that I ever beheld her reclining upon a sofa in my life.

She was the daughter of Mrs. Moore.

And she was like her mother. Sometimes too, though rarely, there was that in her face which re-awakened in my mind the memory of Lawrence Moore. I looked upon her with a painful degree of interest; and being possessed of a knowledge which was shared neither by her, nor by her husband—a knowledge of circumstances, most important, immediately relating to herself, I began to experience a sort of tremulous uneasiness in her presence, and when she shook me by the hand, upon the night of my arrival, before she retired to her chamber, my arm trembled so perceptibly that she asked me whether I was cold.

But when she had quitted the drawing-room it suddenly rushed upon my mind, that whatever I intended to do in this emergency, it behoved me to do quickly. I thought of the evil that might result from an accidental collision between the mother and the daughter, and I deemed that it would be far wiser in me to acquaint Sir Reginald with the whole history, than to suffer him, from motives of false delicacy, to remain any longer in his dangerous ignorance. So I said to him, as I wished him good night, "Sir Reginald, I should like very much to talk with you a little, in my bed-room, before you retire to rest."

"Precisely what I was about to propose," replied the Baronet, a bright smile animating his fine open countenance. "Oh! yes, Gerard, I have so much to tell you; for since we parted, in the spring, my life has been somewhat eventful. I will be with you, before you have had time to put your hair in paper, my boy, for I'm sure that you do paper your hair, or it would never curl so beautifully as it does."

"Nay, Sir Reginald; nature always is more beautiful than art."

"Perhaps," replied the Baronet; "but a fine horse is never the worse for being well groomed."

I retired to my chamber, and I had not long been there, when Sir Reginald entered the room. Seeing little Guido, who was arranging the things upon my toilet-table, he called the boy to him and said, "Do you find that my servants are kind to you, Guido, and that they let you have every thing you wish?"

"Oh! yes, Sir," replied the boy, "they are very, very kind, indeed. Mr. Doveton told me that they would be, and I find them, Sir, just what he said."

"Have you made a friend, yet, of Lopez, my valet?" asked the Baronet; you will love one another, for your country's sake."

"Oh! I do, sir; I love him already; but I am a stranger—more English than Italian;—I ought

to love England best, for I have net, with a world of kindness there ; but, somehow, or other—I cannot help it, — my heart travels back to my birth-place.” And as the boy uttered these words, his dark eyes became lustrous with tears.

Then Sir Reginald, turning round, and addressing himself to me, I dismissed Guide, and said to the baronet, “ This is a strange little fellow, but a good and a grateful one. He expected that your servants would laugh at him ; but I knew that there was no cause for his fears. *Dignum patella operculum*,* as the old Roman proverb expresses it.”

“ And a true proverb it is,” returned the baronet ; “ but what do you think a poor creature once said, in his ignorance, of me ? ”

I could not guess ; and Sir Reginald continued : “ He was sure that I was not much of a gentleman, *because* I was so uncommonly civil.”

“ Now, this observation,” said I, “ might furnish much food for reflection. Resulted it from ignorance, or from knowledge ? was it the growth of plebeian prejudice—of a foregone conclusion ? or was it not rather the offspring of experience—the—”

But the baronet interrupted me, with a hearty slap upon the shoulder, exclaiming, “ My dear

* ‘ The cover matches the dish.’ This proverb corresponds with the ‘ Like master, like man,’ of our own country.

Gerard, I would not have told you the anecdote, had I thought that you would have drawn therefrom any philosophical inferences. I came here not to generalize, but to individualize; and therefore let us talk of *ourselves*—doubtless, no ordinary individuals. Deposit yourself in that soft arm-chair with the white coverlid, and draw near to the fire. Closer still; and I will confront you. There, with our knees meeting before the blazing fire, we look the very picture of social comfort: we look like two friends, as we have been, are, and it shall not be my fault if I lie, when I add—and ever will be. You cannot conceive, Gerard, how happy I am to have you with me. Now, laugh; I wish to see you laugh: you were always a melancholy boy. How well I remember the first day that I felt my heart yearning towards you. Can you recall to your recollection the squeeze of the hand that I gave you in the summer-house, at Meadow-bank? I never pressed any body's hand in that manner, without afterwards loving him dearly. How strange it is, that we should have become friends!—our natures so unlike each other's, and I so much older than yourself. I think that the love, which we cannot account for, is always the strongest of all: I do not like a logical attachment. But, come, Gerard, *say something*; I wish to hear the music of your voice.

You invited me hither, and said that you had something particular to tell me."

"And so I had; but not now. Go on; for I like to hear you."

"Not another word, until you have spoken; for I'm sure that you have something to communicate. I never saw a grave face, like yours, which foretold not an important communication."

"Then I will speak out, and *now*. It were little use to defer the fulfilment of a duty, however unpleasant it may be."

"Unpleasant!" and Sir Reginald's smile of animation passed away from his handsome countenance.

"Yes; it is a very strange thing, that I, by a concurrence of fortuitous circumstances, should have arrived at the knowledge which I am about to communicate to you, who, above all other persons, are the one whom it most becomes me to acquaint with it. I wish that it had fallen to the lot of another"—

"Gerard! my dear Gerard!" interrupted the baronet, leaning forward as he spoke, and affectionately pressing my hand; "speak out, at once, whatever you may have to tell me; for I cannot bear this beating about the bush."

Then, obeying Sir Reginald's injunctions, I outspoke: "What I would tell you, relates to your

wife. It is strange that I should know her history even better than you know it yourself. She is the daughter of General Kirby."

"Why, Gerard, you do not suppose that I am ignorant of the parentage of my wife?"

"Oh! no, no; I do not suppose that; but Mrs. Kirby—do you know the history of her far too eventful life?"

"I do. She offended against her husband, and hei God: she betook herself to the paths of infamy—"

"And her paramour was—"

"A private soldier," returned the baronet, somewhat harshly;—"you see that I know all this full as well as you know it yourself. Why, Gerard, do you awaken in my mind the memory of this wretched history? I know it; I grieve for it; but I cannot alter it: and my Emma is none the less pure, because years ago her mother went astray."

"God forbid that I should think so, Sir Reginald. I do not speak of these things wantonly; I would vain not have alluded to them at all. You wrong me, if you suppose that I am prating for the mere purpose of displaying my knowledge; but let me, at once, hurry on to the announcement that it is now my painful duty to make. Do you know the name of Mrs. Kirby's paramour?—of the soldier with whom she eloped?—It was Moore."

"I did not know that; but the man is dead."

“ He is;—and the widow Moore, who lives at Grasshill, is the mother of Lady Euston.”

“ Good God ! Gerard,—my mother-in-law?—If this be true, I do not wonder that you should have hesitated to make the announcement. But what makes you think that it is so?—Gerard, now tell me all. I always thought that the widow Moore was something much better than she seemed. I *did* wrong you when I spoke harshly just now; for this is, indeed, an important communication, and I cannot thank you enough for having made it; but who told you—whence did you derive this knowledge?—Are you sure that it is quite true?”

“ I will tell you;” and succinctly as possible I narrated the history that I had derived from my uncle. It was true that I had only a basis of circumstantial evidence whereon to rest the pillar of my faith; but that evidence was very conclusive; and it was almost impossible that I should have been mistaken. The time and place of Moore’s death—the account of Mrs. Kirby’s classical attainments—her love for the writings of Jeremy Taylor—the age of her children exactly corresponding with the time of her elopement—all these things combined, made up a case so strong, that Sir Reginald, when my story was ended, neither cross-examined me, nor commented upon my evidence, but at once exclaimed, “ What are we to do?”

And then we took counsel together. A thousand plans were proposed, and one after another rejected. Was it possible to remove the widow Moore from Grass-hill—to procure her an asylum in some alms-houses,—to send Michael to college—and Ella; what was Ella to do? Whenever *her* name was mentioned, I turned aside my head to conceal my emotion. At one time I was on the point of acknowledging my passion; at another, I was almost impelled to express my indignation aloud, when Sir Reginald proposed a scheme for the removal of the Moores, which allotted Ella to some servile occupation. Far into the night we conversed, but failed to mature a plan of operation. “Something must be done,” said Sir Reginald; “but what is that something to be?”

“Oh!” I exclaimed: for it suddenly flashed upon my mind, that there was something very heartless in our deliberations,—“let us bring them together—let the daughter, proudly defying the world, acknowledge her penitent mother. Mrs. Kirby, through long years of sorrow, doing penance for the evil that she hath done, has walked in the ways of God, and is living a new life unto salvation. Long ere this, she has been forgiven above, and shall there be a sterner censorship here below?”

And the generous nature of Sir Reginald Euston triumphed over all conventional misgivings. One

struggle—and all his selfish fears, all his scruples of false delicacy, all his individual apprehensions passed away, and a nobler train of emotions held dominion over his great heart. “What I ought to do, that I dare do,” he thought; “I have courage to do my duty.”

He no longer doubted; he was convinced that he ought to acknowledge the mother of his wife—that he ought to forgive the repentant sinner, and to exalt her from the lowly condition to which her past errors had degraded her. What did it matter to him whether the world prated?—why, let it prate—about “strange disclosures” and “singular discoveries,” as long as his conscience told him that he had acted as it behoved him to act.

But in these resolves, all generous as they were, something there was of a suicidal nature. It was doubtful, though Sir Reginald doubted not, whether that which was so benevolent in intention would prove beneficent in action. Generosity is rarely a nice calculator, and the noblest impulses, if they subside not prematurely into the reaction of a purpose unaccomplished, are too often nothing better than the parents of fool-hardy and self-frustrating adventures. The offspring of a sudden impulse, if it prove not an abortion, surviving is almost sure to be—a monster. Sir Reginald saw nothing in what he was about to do, but justice and generosity meeting one another,

—it seemed to him, that by claiming Mrs. Moore as his mother-in-law, he would be doing an act of the greatest kindness at the same time that he was doing his duty. But this I doubted, and doubting I outspoke, for I was resolute to utter all that occurred to me. “Yet, think you not, Sir Reginald,” said I, “that it will be kinder to suffer this history still to remain a thing unknown? Think you not—”

But Sir Reginald interrupted me. “Kinder!—how kinder? to whom?”

“To Mrs. Moore.”

“No! surely not, Gerard;—how can it be kinder, do you think, to keep a mother from her child?”

“Ah!” I exclaimed, for my heart misgave me that my view of the case was a narrow one;—“the mother,—you say rightly,—perhaps the mother will triumph over all. But that her history should be blazoned to the world,—that her infamy should be made known,—that she should be pointed at, as an evil woman, an adulteress,—that curiosity should investigate, and envy disseminate the strange facts composing her history;—surely these will be hard trials, and they must be undergone if you acknowledge her as the mother of your wife. And Lady Euston too—”

“Stay, Gerard, stay,—you are now dissuading me from that to which, but a few moments ago, you

exhorted me—but in these extremities I know that we are often miserably inconsistent. A thing appears to be good,—we examine it, and find that it is evil. You were impetuous,—I was impetuous; we are calmer now,—wiser and more rational. Look you, Gerard. I am ready to make *any* sacrifice. I cast all selfishness away; and think only of my wife and her mother. To Emma the truth shall be divulged,—she is innocent,—she has never offended, and therefore to her is due the right, I think, of deciding whether this reunion of mother and daughter shall, or shall not, be brought about. I know well what her answer will be; and when it is given, upon you shall devolve the duty of acquainting Mrs. Moore with the strange discovery you have made, and of eliciting the nature of her desires. Gerard, will you undertake this?”

“I will; I think that you are right. Consult Lady Euston first; but how difficult it is to legislate for the passions. We may devise for others; but small chance is there that what we have devised will be executed. We cannot judge by our own feelings,—we cannot say ‘This ought to be’ and doubtless therefore it will be the result of our machinations.’ Sir Reginald, it is very difficult to direct the course of our own emotions into a given channel, but to direct those of others is impossible.”

“I am not sure, Gerard, that you are right,”

returned the baronet.—“I think that it is easier to control another’s passions than our own. But there is little use in arguing the abstract question; we have devised, and we must endeavour to execute. You have not yet seen your parents.”

“No—I must go there to breakfast in the morning, and then I will go to the Moores.”

“But you must be cautious, and await your opportunity. I do not desire that you should do this immediately,—a day or two is of no importance, as I will be watchful, lest chance should direct the footsteps of my wife to the cottage. I am not much disquieted by this intelligence, for I have hopes that it will all terminate as we desire. I do not think that I shall ever have cause to be ashamed of my newly discovered connections.”

“Oh! no,—that I’m sure you will not, for the aristocracy of nature was never exemplified more beautifully than in the family of the Moores.”

END OF VOL. II.

